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TRANSPLANTED

BY

FANNIE E. NEWBERRY

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CONTENTS.

Chapter.		Page.
I.	The Arrest and Sentence	5
II.	First Days in the School	23
III.	Rebellion	35
IV.	At Miss Patty's	43
V.	New Impressions and Friends	54
VI.	Sunday-School and Bessie	63
VII.	Temptations and Tea-Parties	81
VIII.	A Meeting with Old and New Friends	102
IX.	A Picnic, and Bert's Story	123
X.	A Flower Mission and its Results	138
XI.	A Great Surprise	155
XII.	A Visit to Old Scenes	172
XIII.	Jacqueline's Birthday	188
XIV.	Taking a Stand	200
XV.	The Y. M. C. A. Entertainment	215
XVI.	A Year's Events	227
XVII.	To the Mountains	245
XVIII.	Some New Acquaintances	262
XIX.	Being and Doing	276
XX.	Webber's First Patient	296
XXI.	Jacqueline's Hobby	312
XXII.	An Old-Fashioned Christmas	336
XXIII.	Pains and Pleasures of Wealth	352
XXIV.	Jacqueline's Ride	363
XXV.	Conclusion	377

"We call them weeds; did we their forms but study,
We many a secret might unfolded find —
Each tiny plant fulfills its heaven-taught mission,
And bears the impress of Immortal Mind.

And in love's soil, if we but kindly nourish
These fragile things, how strangely they unfold:
The wayside weed is now a dainty blossom,
And breathes fine perfume from its heart of gold."

TRANSPLANTED.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARREST AND SENTENCE.

It was a rather dreary prospect, and so it seemed to strike the girl who stood on the dirty steps, and looked discontentedly up and down the street — street by courtesy only; for its mud and filth, its mutilated pavements, and dilapidated tenements, made it little worthy the name. Yet it had once set out to be something grand, and many of the buildings, now lop-sided and tumbling to decay, still bore traces of original splendor; while here and there a tree, having toughly withstood the abuses which had killed off its brethren, gave mute token of the rows of shade which had once made the roadway beautiful.

But of all this cool shade, cleanliness, and even grandeur, nothing now remained but the name — Gem Street — and that had grown to be so entirely associated with poverty, squalor, and sin, that few even thought what it might originally have meant.

The street, poor as it was, meant home to the girl on the steps, however, and its very familiarity took away most of the disagreeableness in her sight. So her discontented look had nothing to do with her surroundings, after all, for she was only thinking, —

"Now I've got a minute to myself, I want some fun — but what kin I dew? Thar ain't nobody around, and I can't think of nothin'!"

She came slowly down the steps, hopping like a bird from one to another, with long pauses between, till, just as she reached the sidewalk, a quick change came over her face, and, with a loud "Ki yi! Hello there!" she was off, up the street.

"What's the row?" she asked breathlessly, as she reached the corner, around which two boys had just come with a bound. They stopped, and drew long, laboring breaths, for they had been running hard.

"Made a raise!" gasped one, at length. "And got chased by a cop!" added the other, "but we've doubled till we've throwed him off the scent, I guess. Here! take the swag, and hide it — quick!" and he thrust into her hand a lady's handsome shopping-bag, its handle wrenched from the silver fastenings, as if it had been torn asunder by some powerful strain.

"Did you grab it, Mike?" she asked, with wide, admiring eyes, and, as he nodded in answer, she broke into a delighted laugh. "Well, if you ain't the

pluckiest! Won't this make Ma'am good-natured, though! Let's tease fur dumplin's to-night — will ye, boys?"

"Dumplin's is good, but steak's better; and thar's plenty fur both in that alligator-hide thing," said the larger boy, whom she addressed as Mike. "Drat them cops — they most got us, Nick!"

"You bet! and we'd better get inside purty quick, or they may turn up agin," answered the smaller of the two, hurrying along.

Mike followed at a good pace, but the girl, who was intently examining the bag, delayed a moment, feeling quite secure so near home.

It was a fatal delay, for suddenly a powerful hand gripped her shoulder, whirling her forcibly about, till she faced that symbol of all dread and majesty to her — a policeman.

She gave a yell like a startled wild cat, and wrenched herself free with a sudden jerk, but only for a second. Again came that grip firm as iron, grasping her tender flesh like some dreadful vise, and, hardened as she was to bodily punishment, making her feel deadly sick.

"None of that, you baggage!" muttered the officer fiercely. "I've got you now, and you don't get away so easy; come on!"

She gave one despairing look around. The boys

had disappeared; the street, often a-swarm with its many inmates, now seemed as silent as the dead. She was alone, and helpless, in the grasp of the law; and this, to her, meant simply prison, and what ever unknown horrors lurked behind its walls. Most children of twelve would have burst into tears and pleadings — some might have fainted; but, though she turned deathly pale, she made no sound — only her eyes, quick and fiercely bright as a ferret's in a trap, darted here and there, as if looking for some loop-hole of escape.

None came, however, and, with a quickness which took her breath away, she was raced to the nearest police-station, and led in before the blue-coated men who lounged around the open door that mild May morning.

She did not shiver, nor shrink, though a terrible fear gripped her heart, and her glittering, defiant eyes caused one to remark, *sotto voce*, —

"A regular limb, evidently!"

With a word or two of explanation to the officer in charge, the child and the bag were both delivered over to him, and the man of buttons who had arrested her turned with a relieved air to his friends, and was soon chatting pleasantly over a fresh cigar.

Meanwhile, his little charge was led through an iron gate into a corridor, half filled with wretched

beings, who greeted the new arrival with a shout of derisive laughter. But, neither looking to the right nor left, she went into the furthest corner, and, seating herself on the stone bench, turned her face to the wall in grim, unchildlike shame and silence.

No, — hardly shame, either; the dreadful life she had lived had crowded that feeling out of her heart. How could she be ashamed of doing what she had been trained to do for years?

Her feeling was, rather, disgusted rage at having allowed herself to be caught in this manner, with a deep hatred, and desire for revenge on all and everybody — the officers who had deprived her of liberty, the boys who had left her to her fate, and these beings who had mocked and jeered at her.

But after a little, the very quietude of her body stilled the tumult in her soul, and she began to think more reasonably; to remember, too, in a disjointed way, bits of her life which came like pictures to her mind. She saw the bare, dreary house where she ate and slept, and which was presided over by "Ma'am," who furnished an excuse for bed and board, for a sum proportionately small, to the poorest specimens of humanity, keeping this child to help with the work.

At least, this was the way things were explained to outsiders; but she knew well what a nest of

thieves the house-roof covered, how apt were the lessons taught there, and how frequently spoils were brought in. She could see Ma'am's fierce, disappointed eyes when her pupils came home empty-handed, and hear her deep guttural notes of satisfaction when they came well laden.

It had been a hard life, with constant toil and frequent blows, but there had been many half-hours of wild, boisterous fun — of racing through the street, flinging balls of mud or snow, or teasing some drunken wretch, who had tumbled by the sidewalk; or perhaps chasing a dog who had lost its owner — lawless, hateful fun, all of it. But once — and the memory brought almost a smile to her lips even now — there had been a time which seemed like a slice out of heaven, (only she had never heard of heaven) when she had been knocked down by a runaway horse, and taken to the hospital.

She was not badly hurt, and only stayed three days, but one of those was flower-mission day. Oh! how plainly she could still see those flowers by her bedside, and smell the delicious fragrance that filled the big, clean room! They let her take the flowers with her when she went home, and she kept them till they fell to pieces in the broken mug of water, where she placed them.

How beautiful they were! How willingly she

would be knocked down again, just to feel once more that clean, sweet bed, and see and smell those exquisite blossoms. She sighed softly to the prison-wall, and her thoughts went further back, to one scene so remote it was like a dream. She saw her mother on a bed, and her face was different from all the faces she had known since: pure and white and shining, and again she heard her say: —

"Oh, my darling! I must leave you to God. He will keep you."

She remembered the words, but they meant very little to her, now. She had never heard of God, except in curses and ribald jests; and the one she seemed to have been left to was only Ma'am — the dreadful woman whom she served from fear alone, and secretly hated with her whole heart.

But, somehow, these thoughts brought a sense of comfort and quiet, which made her body relax a little from its tense strain, and her head droop more easily against the prison-wall; then her thoughts grew confused, and melted into quainter fancies — and the poor, little, world-worn soul was fast asleep.

It was a cruel awakening to a lonely cell where she found herself lying on a bare pallet, whither she had been carried by some one in her sleep. For a time, her fears and loneliness quite overcame her, and she burst into a passion of tears,— healthy, childish

tears, that relieved heart and brain. But it was not yet evening, and the night that followed seemed endless to the child. Occasionally its uneasy quiet was broken by a drunken scuffle, or a ribald bit of song, as some new offender was brought in; but, being used to these things, she did not mind them very much.

As for her bed, it was as good as, or better than, she had at Ma'am's, so, despite her anxiety over the morrow, she at last fell asleep about midnight, and did not wake till morning. It was a new experience to be led to a hydrant, and made to wash her face, and she hated the touch of the cold, clear water; but her breakfast tasted good, and the worst of her dread and terror had worn off, so she was quite composed when told to follow an officer into the court room.

The justice eyed her through his spectacles, as she was led to a seat beneath his desk, with an air of grieved surprise; the lawyers and reporters stopped talking for a minute to scan her more closely, and two or three even felt a thrill of pity for the poor little waif, used as they were to sin and wrong.

What they saw, as they looked, was a slight figure in a torn and faded calico, and a small white face, framed in dark, loosely curled and tangled locks, whose features were pinched and thin, while the great brown eyes seemed strangely disproportioned to the rest of the face. A pitiful sight, indeed, in such

a place, and made still more so by the hard, defiant look, which robbed it of all childishness or grace.

The officer who had arrested her made his complaint, charging her with theft and vagrancy, she meanwhile looking at him as if she could spring upon him like some wild beast; then the justice turned to the little prisoner, —

"These are grave charges, my child!" he said in a gentle tone, which made her turn her brown eyes upon him with a curious stare. "Do you plead guilty, or not guilty?"

"*Not!*" she said, fiercely. "I never stealed that bag — 'twas Mike an' Nick as done it, an' you'll find 'em at No. 13 Gem Street, — the villains!"

Her voice was so decided and vindictive as she gave this information, that some of the officers smiled, while the justice questioned her more closely.

But, in spite of all his diplomacy, he could elicit nothing against Ma'am herself; nor, indeed, any of the members of her household, except these two. They were the ones who had betrayed and deserted her, and punish them she would, if possible; but she had no present grudge against the others — let them go!

The end of it was that she was declared a vagrant, and receiver of stolen property, and the justice, feeling that he was doing it for her own good,

sentenced her to the Reform School at A——, for three years.

Those of us who only see the brighter side of life can scarcely understand what feelings came over the poor, unlovely child as she heard this sentence There were but two things in life she really cared for — her liberty, and plenty to eat; but two things she really feared — Ma'am's wrath, and the terrors of the law. Yet Ma'am's whippings could not last long, if they did come often, and she was generally a trifle kinder after them for a day or two — but what would it be in a Reform School?

She looked from face to face — there was no relenting! The justice was already occupied with another case; each man was busy with his own affairs — what was this child to them? And now, the officer touched her shoulder.

"Come," he said, and mechanically she went with him, her soul in a tempest of despairing rage, but her face was as non-committal as ever.

She could get no comfort anywhere, except in one dreadful thought: she hoped that her information against Mike and Nick would send them, too, to prison — if not, she would do them a worse injury, some day; and this wicked thirst for revenge really helped her to be brave under her own heavy trial!

Do you think her almost too bad for me to make a

heroine of? Yet would you be any better if you had been brought up with thieves for companions, and absolutely no knowledge of good; and if, above all, you had never known what love meant? I think not.

It was about two o'clock that afternoon, when the sheriff and his charge boarded the train for an hour's ride to A—— and the latter, who had never been in a railway car before, was quite taken out of herself by the novelty of all she saw. Sitting next a window she was soon absorbed by the view outside. The sight of the wide, open country was utterly new to her, and she now saw it at its loveliest; not a great expanse, to be sure, for A—— was but a suburb of the larger place, but enough to see broad fields of sprouting wheat and timothy, their tender green contrasting with the rich fresh loam just upturned by the plow, — enough to see orchards just bursting into bloom, whose wonderful beauty made her give a delighted exclamation, and turn to the sheriff with a smile on her face which quite transfigured it. He dropped the paper he had been reading, and looked at her with an answering smile. He was a man of kindly nature, but he had not been attracted by the sullen, hard-faced child, and had scarcely spoken to her before — now he said, pleasantly, —

"You like the country?"

"Is this country?" she asked, wonderingly.

"Of course; haven't you ever been out of town before?"

She shook her head, and turned back to the window, unwilling to lose one instant's sight of the loveliness without. By and by, however, she was aware of a certain fresh, sweet odor which brought the hospital powerfully to mind, and, turning quickly, saw a boy coming down the aisle of the car with a basket of flowers on his arm. She leaned forward, watching him with intent eagerness, while the sheriff also watched her furtively, from behind his paper. The boy passed by, and an intensely disappointed look came into the little face, as she caught the sheriff's eye.

"Pretty, aren't they?" he remarked in a careless tone. "Do you like flowers?"

"Oh, yes! Won't they give us any? They did to the hospital!" she answered, naively.

He laughed with good-natured amusement, and called out, —

"Here, boy! Come back! How much for a bunch of pansies?"

"A dime, sir."

"All right — give us one!" and selecting a fine bunch, the officer handed it to the amazed child.

"They're for you, my girl," he said kindly. "I'm glad you like flowers; it's a good sign!"

It was the first time in her life that she had been made the recipient of a gift, and nothing could have so greatly surprised her. The words "Thank you!" were strange to her tongue, but the strong feeling of gratitude which, for the first time, filled her heart, must have some expression. She looked from the flowers to the man, and a softened light came into her brown eyes, which made them seem beautiful, as she said, earnestly, —

"I like you!"

Her tone and manner made the words mean a great deal, and the man of law plainly showed the pleasure they gave him. When they left the car, her hand rested quietly in his, while the other tenderly grasped the precious flowers — and so the first ray of light and love entered the child's heart on the very day she was deprived of her liberty, and consigned to what had seemed, in anticipation, a dreadful prison-house.

From the train they stepped into the Reform School wagon, which was awaiting them, driven by an old negro, who showed his teeth in a broad grin at sight of the sheriff and his charge.

Turning from the town — to her great content — they made for the open country where, after a mile ride, they came in sight of a cluster of pretty, Queen Anne shaped buildings of red brick, scattered here

and there in a large, park-like inclosure, with handsome drive-ways, and the greenest of lawns, sloping gently to the road.

They turned in at the gate, and drove to the central, and largest building which faced the main drive, stopping before its door. The little girl, who had been thinking it was a very fine place, looked at her new friend, questioningly.

"Yes, this is the school," he said, answering her look, and lifting her out as he spoke: "You'll find lots of flowers, too!" he added, kindly.

They went inside the broad doors, through a tiled hall, into a large, handsome room, where a lady of fine presence met them, her white hair waving back from a strong, clear-cut face, and her rich, black dress fitting well her compact figure.

She shook hands with the sheriff, then looked down at the child.

"So young!" she said, in a pitying tone; then, more briskly: "Well, we'll try and make a woman of her!"

Then they passed into a smaller private office, and, seating herself at a desk, the lady superintendent opened a large book, took up a pen, and asked, —

"What is the name?"

"Jack Silsby," said the sheriff.

The lady stopped, her pen suspended in mid-air.

"Jack!" she said, a little sharply, "that's no name for a girl! What's your real name, child — don't you know?"

The girl slowly shook her head, struggling with some memory, which eluded her like a dream.

"It's Jack; that's what 'tis," she said perplexedly, but with an air of truth which made the lady look at her closely. "Jack — Jack —" she mused; "there *are* names — let me see! Jacquette, Jacqueline — could it be" —

But the brown eyes looked up eagerly.

"I know — it's that — she said it — mamma did!" and the struggle for the elusive memory, with the strange sound of "mamma" on her lips, brought a little flush to her cheeks.

"Which?" asked the lady, watching her intently.

"Jack — leen," she said, stammering over the Frenchy syllable; "it's that, *sure!*"

So she was booked with the pretentious name of Jacqueline Silsby, her age guessed at as twelve years, eyes and hair dark, health generally good, etc., etc.

"You will have to begin in cottage F," said the superintendent, in her business tone, "and work your way up. A is our Honor Cottage, and when you get there, you'll have especial privileges. You will be treated well, so long as you behave yourself, and obey the rules, and I hope soon to see you promoted."

As the lady began, she had touched an electric button in the wall, and now a girl appeared at the door, and waited her will with a respectful air.

She was tall and sallow, with mild gray eyes, and was dressed in a plain, dark-blue calico, with a white neckerchief of spotless purity folded across her bosom.

"Take this girl to F," said the superintendent, designating Jacqueline, who started to follow, then stopped, and turned to the sheriff.

He had already made a move toward her, and now held out his hand. Jacqueline put hers within it, and looked up into the rugged, fatherly face. Something struggled in her soul for utterance — something of the new and better feelings which his kindness had awakened in her, but she had no words for these, so she fell back on the old sentence.

"I like you!" she repeated, with her wistful eyes looking into his. "Good-by!"

"Good-by, my dear!" he said, almost tenderly, giving her hand a warm pressure, and his eyes followed her, as she reluctantly left the room.

He had children of his own, and something like moisture came into his eyes now, as he turned again to the lady.

"That's twice she's said that, to-day, Mrs. Hungerford; the poor child's got good in her somewhere,

I'm sure, for she is so easily impressed by kindness —and you never saw anybody so crazy over flowers! Well, she'll be better off here!" — and the two were soon deep in official talk.

Meanwhile, Jacqueline followed her guide through a back corridor, down a flight of outside steps, and along a winding path, to that one of the Queen Anne cottages furthest from the road. Across its front was a broad piazza, with a door in the center, and long, double windows on either side.

Over the door, which was ajar, was a big gilded F, and, as they stepped under it a bell rang sharply in some inner room. Then a door opened upon the right of the hall, and a lady stepped forward.

She was plump and fair, but had an anxious line between her eyes, which made her look rather stern. Jacqueline's conductress bowed, saying, —

"The new inmate, ma'am," and turning, disappeared at once, while Jacqueline followed the lady into a parlor, which she thought the prettiest place she had ever seen.

"What is your name?" asked the manager.

"Jack-leen Silsby," answered the child, and took the seat assigned her. The lady smiled.

"Something of a mouthful! You will be known here as No. 27" — and stepping to an inner door, she called: "Mrs. Kenneth!"

A comfortable-looking woman appeared, to whom she said, briskly, —

"New inmate — Jacqueline Silsby — No. 27 — I give her into your hands," and again the poor child, now utterly weary, obediently followed.

They crossed the hall, and went up a broad, slippery flight of waxed stairs, then down another corridor, and turned into a large and well-equipped bath-room. Here, poor Jacqueline was put through such a scrubbing as she had never even dreamed of, and then, exhausted, yet strangely enough half rested as well, was seated in a chair, and her heavy locks shingled tight to her round little head.

This operation finished, she was clothed in a garb exactly like that of the girl whom she had lately seen, and conducted back to the manager's room.

All this had made Jacqueline look so pale and weary that the lady noticed it, and said, more kindly than she had yet spoken, —

"It is half an hour to supper. Lie down on that sofa, and rest."

Nothing loath, the child did as bidden, and, in five minutes, was sound asleep.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST DAYS IN THE SCHOOL.

When she woke, the room was in shadow, but a light shone in from the hall, and there came to her ears the sound of singing, somewhere beyond.

Such singing was entirely new to her. The words "Jesus, lover of my soul," conveyed actually no meaning to her brain, but the sweet air made the tears rush swiftly to her eyes. She raised herself on her elbow, and looked all about her — at the pretty, bright room, now but dimly lighted through the open doorway, — at the clean, trim dress she wore, — then she felt of her smooth, cropped head, and lying back again with a certain sense of luxurious content, let the music float through her brain, while it began to dawn upon her that this might not be the awful place she had imagined it — that there might, perhaps, be ways of living better than she had known, — and something like a dim hope stirred in her heart.

She heard brisk steps in the hall then, and Mrs. Kenneth's voice said, —

"But she hasn't had her supper, Miss Amhurst."

"I know," was answered in the manager's voice,

"but she was so evidently worn out, I wouldn't waken her. We'd better, now, though; Mrs. Granger has saved her some supper, I believe. Poor child! I feel sorry for her," which words were a new surprise to the listening girl.

Then Miss Amhurst, entering, lighted the gas, and seeing her charge was awake, said quietly, —

"You may get up now, and have your supper; Mrs. Kenneth will show you the way."

So Jacqueline ate her big bowl of bread and milk, alone in a great dining-room, where plates were laid for forty at least, and thought in her sharp hunger, she had never tasted any thing so good; after which she followed the matron upstairs to a door in a side corridor, upon which, in black letters, was painted her own new number — 27.

"Here is your room," said the matron, briefly; "good-night!" and Jacqueline was gently thrust in, while the door shut with a snap that locked it fast.

She stood, and looked about her a moment, for a dim light from the corridor shone in through the grated transom above the door, and disclosed a very small, cell-like room, with bare, polished floor, narrow iron bedstead, draped in spotless white, one small table and chair, and a grated window opposite the door. Across the bed lay a coarse white night-dress, whose use she had learned at the hospital, and

now, with a strange mixture of feelings — a certain sense of injury at being kept here against her will, struggling with the conviction that it was a better home than she had ever known before — she prepared herself for the night, and, creeping in between the cool sheets, lay for a little time broad awake, but strangely quiet, and free from hateful thoughts, till gentle sleep closed the brown eyes over a softer, more satisfied expression, than they had worn for a long time.

Jacqueline woke to one of those mornings which dawn upon us, now and then, to revive our hopes of heaven. The air was balm; the sky, one broad, blue smile; the trees, a bouquet of bloom; the birds, riotous with delight — but in her spotless cell she could get only a glimpse of it all. A great bell, booming somewhere, had awakened her, and she hastened to dress, with that same odd mixture of expectation and angry rebellion with which she had gone to sleep.

Indeed, her soul had unconsciously entered upon a new era — the waters of life were stirring from their long, ice-bound sleep; if the sunshine of love should fall upon them, they would sparkle into life and beauty, and rise in mists to heaven; but if the freezing breath of indifference, injustice, and wrong were to touch them, they would congeal again into hard, cold inaction and despair.

She dressed, and waited with angry impatience, scowling fiercely at the locked door, and when it flew open at the matron's touch, she sprang out, much like a rat from a trap.

"Try that over again," said Mrs. Kenneth's cool voice; and Jacqueline, who had been taught subjection, if not obedience (for true obedience must come from the heart), went sullenly back, and came forth in a more leisurely way.

"Stand there," said Mrs. Kenneth, placing her with her back to the door, and, glancing down the corridor, Jacqueline saw that before nearly every other door stood a girl, in like position.

Some time passed — it seemed five minutes to Jacqueline, but was probably not more than two, waiting minutes are so long! — when — boom went the big bell again, at the sound of which every girl turned, as if on a pivot, and faced the stair-way.

Jacqueline turned with the rest, and suddenly the line began to move. She moved with it, conscious that Mrs. Kenneth was by her side, and so, in perfect silence, they marched to the bath-room, where each girl, in turn, made her ablutions; then, at another boom, stepped briskly down the stairs, and the length of the lower hall, to the long dining-room, which crossed the house in the rear.

Here, still following, Jacqueline found herself

within the long bench at the side of the cleanly-scrubbed, but undraped, pine table, opposite a bright tin plate and cup, before which, at the tap of a hand-bell, she seated herself with the rest, — for she was quick to observe and imitate, and somehow, this morning, felt a certain pride in showing this ability, always keeping in reserve the power to annoy by all sorts of grave misconduct should she choose.

So, when the rest bowed their heads in a silent blessing, she bowed, too, though without an inkling of its meaning, and as Jacqueline looked up, she found Mrs. Kenneth's eyes resting kindly upon her, and knew she was pleased.

The meal was plain, but better than she had ever known before, and she ate with a rude relish that plainly showed her neglected breeding. Once, Mrs. Kenneth gave her a long look, when she had substituted her fingers for a knife and fork, and, though the offender's eyes snapped defiance, she did not so greatly transgress again.

For, somehow, back of all the sordidness of her past, was a faint, far memory of something fine and good, which came to her at times like an instinct — at others like a flash of memory.

For instance, once when Ma'am, in a sudden fit of decency, had told her sharply to pull up her stockings, and tie her shoes, she had paused in the act,

and with her eyes growing large and thoughtful had said, in a dreamy tone, —

"They used to be that way all the time, seems to me."

The same feeling came over her this morning — this orderly eating used to be the rule once, but where? Certainly not at Ma'am's rude, boisterous table! Was it, then, in some other life? she wondered, and her face grew soft, as it always did when these puzzling fancies came to her, giving it for a brief space the childish grace it so sadly lacked at other times.

Breakfast over, another tap brought the girls to their feet again, after which they filed out in regular order, each one going about the morning task assigned her.

In this institution (which, though a real one in successful operation, may seem somewhat different from ordinary reform schools to the most of our readers) the entire work outside and in, with a few exceptions, was performed by the girls themselves, under the direction of the lady officers; the only men on the place being the old negro before mentioned, who took charge of the steam engine used in heating the buildings, and the stable; also a New England farmer, who lived with his family in a pretty, rose-embowered cottage near the gates, and attended to the heaviest

of the farm work. The planting, hoeing, weeding, raking, garden-making and milking, with all in-door work, was, however, performed entirely by the inmates.

It was, emphatically, a *girl's* reformatory, only those between the ages of ten and twenty-five being received, and Jacqueline was, at present, the youngest pupil there.

Every cottage was built to accommodate about fifty, and was presided over by the manager, matron, and housekeeper; the two former acting also as teachers during school hours, while the latter attended only to the household management.

You have been with Jacqueline in the manager's parlor, behind which two bed-rooms accommodated herself and the matron; on the other side of the hall was the large school-room, with folding chairs and desks, which could be easily put out of the way when it was to be converted into a play-room, for some festive occasion; back of the hall was the long dining-room crossing the house, and, still beyond were kitchen, pantries, etc.

Above the parlor was the housekeeper's pleasant chamber, and above the front part of the study-hall was a sewing-room, with shelves for work, and three busy sewing-machines, clicking all day in making and mending for the inmates; the rest of this floor,

and one above, being divided into the tiny cell-like bedrooms, where each girl slept alone, — the whole being kept as neat as toil and soap could make them.

As the line filed into the hall, after breakfast, Miss Amhurst touched Jacqueline's shoulder, and, following her beckoning finger, the child stepped into the pretty parlor.

"I am told you like flowers," said the lady, in her brusque way, "and, when possible, we always give our pupils such work as is agreeable to them."

Jacqueline's face showed her pleasure, and she continued, —

"Come! I'll show you your duties," then led the girl into a garden beside the cottage, — a real, old-fashioned flower garden, with beds, round, rectangular, and crescent-shaped, interspersed by narrow walks, with a sentinel-like bush of roses, syringa, or scarlet japonica placed here and there, while borders of coleus, pinks, box, and portulaca, outlined the beds.

It was too early for many flowers to be in bloom, but a few crocuses and tulips held up their proud heads, and there was a scent of violets in the air. Two girls were silently at work in different parts, and the manager soon designated Jacqueline's place and task, — then, bringing a camp-chair into the small balcony overlooking the garden, she seated herself comfortably, with a book, to oversee the work.

It was a novel experience for Jacqueline, and her heart grew light as she turned up the sweet, fresh earth with her trowel, and picked out the bits of green weeds which seemed to her far too pretty to be cast away; till, after a little, quite forgetting her surroundings, she suddenly burst out, shrilly, —

"Oh, a snake!"

"Silence!" said Miss Amhurst, imperatively, stepping forward, and leaning over the balcony-railing — then an involuntary smile flitted across her lips, for No. 27's snake proved to be nothing worse than an enormous angle-worm, which was already rapidly wriggling its way back into the earth.

"That's a perfectly harmless worm — do not speak again, except in answer to one of the officers, No. 27; it is against the rules," and she reseated herself.

Now Jacqueline had always been a sociable child, and this command fell upon her like a thunderbolt.

Not speak at all! Why, she had already made up her mind which girls she could "have fun with," when she got acquainted, and now that was all nipped in the bud by this stern interdict!

"I will talk, though!" she thought rebelliously, "I'd like to see 'em stop my tongue — the fools!" and she returned to her work, with a heavy scowl darkening the bright face of a few moments before.

Breakfast was eaten at six o'clock, so there was

quite a long intermission before the first school-bell rang at a quarter to nine, and Jacqueline's back ached almost as it used to after a busy day at Ma'am's, as she straightened herself in imitation of the other girls, at its summons, and, obeying Miss Amhurst's gesture of command, followed them indoors.

Mrs. Kenneth stood in the lower hall, whose polished floor was still damp from its fresh scrubbing.

"Go to the bath-room, and clean yourselves," she ordered curtly — "then attend to your rooms; don't waste a minute!" and something in the tone seemed to leave no loop-hole for disobedience.

So Jacqueline washed hands and face for the second time that morning, — feeling it a most unnecessary ceremony, too! — then, with Mrs. Kenneth at her elbow, tried to make her bed. But this was new work indeed to one whose heap of straw and ragged comforter had hitherto received little or no attention; three times Mrs. Kenneth deliberately tore off the clothes, making her try again, — and nothing but an intense curiosity to know what was coming next in this strange, orderly household kept her from breaking out in open rebellion.

At length this arduous task was ended, and she was again made to stand in front of her door, until the line was formed and marched into the school-

room, which was so large and light it fairly dazzled her eyes as she entered.

The forty odd girls were soon in their seats, and the school was opened with prayer and singing. The former was quite unintelligible to Jacqueline, but, as the young voices rose in "Nearer my God to Thee," the sweet strains thrilled along her childish nerves, till her eyes filled with tears, and the rebellious thoughts seemed to die quite out of her heart.

Then followed the usual exercises of a well-ordered school-room, and the ignorant little new-comer found herself, with nine other girls, in the lowest class of all, reading and spelling the first primer lessons, pointing out the towns and rivers of her own State on a large map, and sliding different-colored beads about on a frame, to help her in remembering the simplest combinations of numbers.

She had never been a dull girl, and now grew so excited and interested that her large eyes fairly shone, while her pale cheeks were red as roses. Mrs. Kenneth was her teacher, and found herself getting so much interested in the excited girl as to unconsciously devote an unusual amount of time to her.

Once, after accomplishing quite a sum in subtraction with the red and blue beads, Jacqueline burst into a real childish laugh, and the lady, much to the surprise of the rest, only smilingly shook her head in

rebuke, as she gently tapped the shoulder over which she was bending, causing Jacqueline to look up into the motherly face much as she had looked into that of the sheriff's yesterday, — and the lady knew she had won her heart.

Poor, starved, little heart! so ready to be good, and yet so thoroughly trained to evil!

It was, altogether, a strange and eventful day to the waif, and when night found her once more in that clean little room, it was with different feelings from those of last night that she reviewed the situation. She felt for the first time in her life, that glow of satisfaction which comes from the consciousness of something done, and well done — felt, too, the exquisite pleasure of having won friends, and commendation.

Naturally she was impulsive and warm-hearted, but these traits had been nearly smothered by harshness and neglect. She was too untaught, however, to understand or explain to herself the source of all her comfortable feelings now, but as she snuggled closer into her snowy pillow, she whispered, —

"It's kinder fun bein' good here!" and dropped off to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

REBELLION.

But there come days to all of us when it's no fun at all to be good, as Jacqueline was not slow to discover. It could not be wondered at that the monotonous routine, and strict enforcement of rules, should soon become irksome to one so untrained and lawless — but, above every thing else, she rebelled at that one enforcing silence between the pupils. Yet, though this seemed hard, it was really necessary, to keep such undisciplined, and often evil, natures from coming into too close contact; but to Jacqueline it was all of a piece with Ma'am's old "tantrums" — having neither sense, nor reason, and only to be gotten around by deceit and slyness.

There was a colored girl who sat near Jacqueline in school, and worked beside her in the garden, who had completely fascinated her. She had a droll face, and two great laughing, rolling eyes, which expressed more than some people's tongues: and with them she had telegraphed good fellowship to Jacqueline more than once, something in their saucy challenging

awaking a like feeling of mischievous defiance in herself.

One day, they were working on the same flower-bed when Miss Amhurst was called in-doors a minute. Quick as a flash, each girl seized the opportunity.

"Who be you?"

"What's yer name?" were their simultaneous questions.

"Oh! I'se Dinah Grump, an' I'm yere fur bein' a norphan."

"I'm Jackleen Silsby, an' I didn't do nothin' 'tall!" were the hurried answers.

Time was precious, you see.

"Does yer like it?" asked Dinah, curiously.

"Oh, some — only it's too stiff 'n' clean — an' it's a mean shame 'at we can't talk!"

"Oh, dere's heaps o' chances — on'y I'se tryin' to git promoted, so I'se dretful circumwentious."

"What's that?" asked No. 27, with big eyes.

"What's *what*, honey? 'Promoted'? Gittin' 'long to nex' cottage, fur bein' fust-class, so I'se keerful to behave ye see. I ain't hed a mark fur a week. W'en you gits up to Honor you hes heaps o' good times — you kin talk now 'n' then, an' go up town 'long wi' the matron an'" —

Here, as if moved by electricity, Dinah dropped to her work, as mum as a china doll, while Jacqueline

still stood, hoe suspended in air, gazing blankly at her, in utter amazement at the sudden change. Only for an instant, however, for Miss Amhurst's voice said sternly, —

"No. 27! You are idling. To-morrow you will wash dishes in the kitchen."

"I *won't!*" cried Jacqueline in a sudden fury, angry at being balked of hearing Dinah's remarks, angrier still at being found out in her delinquencies, angriest of all at what seemed to her downright injustice and oppression — "I won't wash dishes — I hate 'em! I'll work here, or not at all!"

The manager's eyes grew dark with surprised wrath — such flat rebellion was rare indeed, in this place, where cold system seemed to hold every-body and every thing in iron bands — and from such a child, too!

She took her by the shoulder, and shaking her a little attempted to lead her away — but Jacqueline had no notion of being led! It was the first time her old temper had broken bounds, and it must have its way, utterly regardless of consequences.

If the child had known she was to be killed for it, she could hardly have overcome the paroxysm of rage that now burst forth. She struck, scratched, screamed, and scolded, using all the old street language she had thought nearly forgotten.

Miss Amhurst kept a strong hold upon the neck of her dress, however, and slowly forced her in-doors, occasionally giving her a stinging blow upon her ears, as her language grew unbearable; but attempted no remonstrance in words.

At the door Mrs. Kenneth came forward, sorely non-plused at seeing her docile scholar in such a position. But she asked no questions, and soon Jacqueline, still screaming and protesting, was thrust into her own cell, and the door shut fast upon her. Not only this, but suddenly, without an instant's warning, she found herself in a darkness so intense she literally could not see one ray of light.

She stopped screaming for very awe, and groped about her.

What had happened? Was she suddenly struck blind? Had the sun gone out? What *could* it mean?

The angry sobs which still shook her body seemed fairly driven back by this thick curtain of blindness — oh, should she never see again? Then her usual courage revived.

"It's nothing but a trick to scare me — that's all! They'll find I don't scare so easy — drat 'em!" and to keep up her defiant spirit she burst into a loud, coarse, street song she had often heard in her old home.

But, after a little, her voice wavered, — then grew

quavering and uncertain — then dropped into silence — and she sat as if stunned for a time. Then her wide, startled eyes glanced quickly here and there, vainly looking for some ray of hope (or light, which meant hope) in this dungeon, and finding it not, strong, involuntary shudderings shook her from head to foot.

Her bravery was all gone, and the "horror of great darkness" compassed her about, a horror no strong man, even, can withstand, and before which a child must wilt as quickly as would a plant treated in the same way. Cowering close to the door, she leaned her head against its panels, and listened for some sound from without.

Oh! for a step in the corridor, the slam of a door, the far-away clatter of dishes in the kitchen, — the confused bustle of the school-room, any thing, *any thing*, except this black, awful silence.

Yet she jumped and trembled all over as she heard the click of a key in the lock, and the next instant fell forward at Mrs. Kenneth's feet, overpowered by the dazzling light, and her feelings of intense relief.

Mrs. Kenneth raised her gently, then unfastened and slid back the iron shutters which had so effectually excluded all light from window and transom, when worked automatically from below; then, turn-

ing, she took Jacqueline's shaking hand in hers, and said quietly, —

"Are you ready to obey the rules, my child?"

"Yes'm," said Jacqueline sobbingly, for once completely subdued.

Jacqueline had never looked so childishly sweet and touching as she did that moment. Her face was pale from her fright, her eyes dark, wistful, and heavy with tears, her mouth set in grieved lines, like a baby's. As Mrs. Kenneth seated herself, and looked down on the child standing at her knee, so young, so alone, so filled with good and bad impulses, a great wave of pity surged through her heart. She thought of the one baby-girl she had laid away years ago, in a little white casket, who would have been about the same age, now — what if she had been left to the mercy of a charitable institution? — and out of this thought came the abrupt question, —

"Jacqueline, do you remember your mother?"

The child's eyes grew thoughtful and still.

"Yes, I — think so. She was pale, an' purty, an' laid on a bed — an' she called me 'Blossom.'"

"She was good, too, wasn't she, dear?"

Jacqueline nodded her head, emphatically.

"Then she has gone to heaven, my child. Don't you ever think you would like to go to her, some day?"

Again the round, dark head nodded, while the darker eyes, large and solemn, were fixed on the lady's.

She knew, now, something of what heaven meant — that it was a beautiful place away above us somewhere, and had mentally fixed upon the moon as being the most brilliant — and thus likely — place she could see in the wide sky!

"Then, my dear," continued Mrs. Kenneth, "you must be good, too; you must make an effort to study the lessons, obey the rules, and learn all about God and heaven; are you willing to try?"

"Yes'm!" said Jacqueline earnestly.

"That's my good girl!" and, yielding to a sudden impulse, the matron stooped and kissed the child full on her lips.

It was the first kiss she had received since her mother's death, and it sent a flash of love and joy to her very soul.

"I will — I *will* try!" she whispered, eagerly — "You're just as good's a mother!" and, together, the now firm friends left the cell.

They met Miss Amhurst in the lower hall, who lifted her eyes questioningly as they passed by, and Mrs. Kenneth leaning towards her said, so quickly Jacqueline did not catch the words, "She yields easily to kindness."

In a few moments Jacqueline stood before a large table, wiping the tin cups and plates another girl had washed; doing it as neatly and gravely, too, as if no thought of rebellion had ever crossed her mind.

CHAPTER IV.

AT MISS PATTY'S.

It had been a showery night, and the morning that followed was as fresh and fair as a baby from its bath.

Miss Patty Barnes went to the front door of her cottage, and, leaning against one of the honeysuckle-draped pillars, looked across the lawn, and smiled as its gem-like dewdrops twinkled in her eyes. It was a pretty home, and Miss Patty loved it, yet, somehow, this morning a lonely feeling mingled with her content. She turned to the saucy mocking-bird, whistling in his cage close by, and talked to him a little, but still the lonely feeling did not go away.

"Dear me!" she said, at last, "how I do miss Bert. Oh, ho! well, I'm getting old, that's a fact! Let me see — fifty-nine next November — can it be? And what's to become of me when I *do* get old — poor, lone, crippled body that I am? Well, well, the good Lord knows — he'll look after me better than I can after myself — that's certain" —

Just then there was a crash within, as if of broken glass or crockery, and Miss Patty shivered.

"Oh, that girl! What has she done now, I wonder!" and turning, limped slowly in-doors; for the kind lady was lame from rheumatism.

She passed along a narrow hall, then through a snug dining-room, and stopped at the kitchen-door, beyond; where, in spite of her annoyance, a smile crossed her face, at the ludicrous fright so plainly shown by the little maid, who stood with starting eyes, gazing at the wreck of a handsome china dish on the floor.

At sight of Miss Patty, she burst into tears.

"I no can help!" she sobbed, in her broken English, "I no good here — must work in field — me!" and she pointed despairingly to the fragments of china, then held up her coarse, toil-hardened hands and shook them dolorously. Miss Patty's smile widened into a laugh of amusement.

"Poor thing! You can't help being clumsy, I know," she said, understanding well how the little Polish girl had always worked just like a boy — hoeing potatoes, splitting wood, or driving cattle: "no wonder these delicate things slip from your grasp. Here! give me the dish-towel. I'll finish the breakfast china, and you may go and dig the potatoes for dinner."

"Yah!" with a radiant smile, "I deeg — I know — so goot lady!" and with a gesture full of gratitud

and humility, the foreign-bred girl suddenly stooped, and kissed the lady's hand.

It rather shocked good Miss Patty's democratic ideas.

"Sho! Sho!" she said hastily, "run along now, and be sure and put on your sun-bonnet."

But after the girl had gone, a line of care appeared between her eyes. "This won't do!" she thought decidedly, "I must have better help than this. I thought, being used to outdoor work, she could assist me in the greenhouse and garden, as well as kitchen, but it would be a good deal like turning a donkey loose among my flowers — poor, clumsy creature! I'm sorry for her, but what if I should be sick? She'd drive me crazy, and smash every thing in-doors and out! She means well, but she needs a sight of training, and that's something I never could have given her in my best days — Oh, dear!" and for the second time that morning a long sigh welled up from her heart — though sighs were an unusual thing with bright, chirrupy Patty Barnes.

When the girl appeared with the potatoes, she bade her first wash them, ready for the oven, and then go to the Post Office for the morning's mail, and — still limping painfully, for the shower which had so refreshed the earth had brought fresh pain to her — she passed again across the dining-room to the side of the

house (but end of the room) which was entirely of glass, and passing through the central sliding-door, stepped directly into a small, but very complete greenhouse, with banks of potted plants rising on either side of a narrow path which intersected it at right angles to the entrance. Beneath the sheltering sides were large beds for slips; and climbing over the walls, even up on to the glass of the sloping roof, were vines of rich clematis, glossy smilax, and the rarer passion-flower.

It was fragrant and cool this September morning, and the line of care smoothed itself out of Miss Patty's brow, as she passed slowly down the path, pinching off a dead leaf here, examining an opening bud there — for this was her treasure-house in every sense of the word; not only as the business by which she earned a comfortable living, but as the place also in which she dreamed her sweetest dreams (oh! you needn't smile! Even old maids of fifty-nine have their dreams, though they may not be the same as yours!) and forgot her cares and ailments.

Here, too, though she had never told any body, she came to talk with God, in the familiar, loving way she had, telling him her wants, anxieties, and fears, and asking for more patience, grace, and strength. It was her treasure-house in both an earthly and heavenly sense — for Miss Patty had learned to make

her religion a part of her business, and her business a part of her religion — squaring her whole life by that only true Rule and Compass — the Bible — remembering that the Rule is not for exceptional times only, but for every day and all day, and that the command, "Be diligent in business," is to be equally obeyed with the one, "Be ye fervent in spirit."

A step in the other room showed that Marta, as she called herself, had returned, and Miss Patty went back to the dining-room to receive her mail, a large one, seemingly, for a lonely woman. But six of the big envelopes held business matter, orders from city florists perhaps, while the seventh more delicate inclosure brought a smile to her face, as she caught sight of the writing, —

"Maggie Kenneth, I declare! bless her dear heart! I haven't heard from her this year" — and shoving the others aside, she seated herself comfortably, to read the following, —

A—— Reform School, Sept. 1, 18—

My dear Patty: — Did you think yourself forgotten, dear old friend of my girlhood, (for I am aware it's ages since I wrote!) or are you, like myself, too busy to think of any thing beyond the narrow circle of your duties, except now and then? At any rate, when I do remember you, it is with affection enough to make amends for all former forgetfulness.

But perhaps you won't thank me for this letter, when you

know it is written expressly to ask a favor of you — a great favor — but one I feel that you will grant at once, if you can, and will as frankly decline, if you think best to do so.

You know that I meet with all sorts of queer girl-natures in this work of mine, but never have I been so interested in any case as in the following. It is that of a little girl of about twelve, named Jacqueline Silsby, who was sent here on a general charge of vagrancy — receiving stolen goods, etc., last May.

The child has a delicate form and features, but her face was as old and haggard as that of a woman grown, when she came; still, in spite of her coarse speech and ways, and her hard, bold stare, there was something about her — I can't tell what — which, from the very first, interested me — an almost spiritual look at times, like a flash of sunlight over a coarse painting, and a voice whose sweet, refined tones were in striking contrast with the dreadful speech she used.

Then her Christian name struck me as an uncommon one for such a low-bred child (though it had degenerated into "Jack," and was only recalled by an effort of memory), and altogether, I couldn't get the child off my mind. With all this, she showed a love for flowers which was simply a passion, and, in fact, never gave a symptom of rebellion until ordered away from the garden work she so loved, into the kitchen — when she went into one of the awfullest tantrums I ever saw, and we had to give her a half hour of darkness.

It subdued her (outwardly, at least), and a talk I had with her afterwards did her still more good. It was about her mother, who died when she was very young, but who seems to have been a person of some refinement, at least.

In short, the child has fallen in love with me, and, I declare, I believe I feel the same toward her! She has learned wonder-

fully fast, — I never saw a brighter scholar — and is on the list for promotion next month.

This, you see, takes her out of my hands, and though she is proud of the honor, she can't speak of leaving me without a burst of tears, and her nature is so peculiar that I dread these new influences. Poor little thing! she has been starving for love all her life, and is now opening like a flower under its influence — if thrust out into the cold again, I fear the consequences; for, though her new teachers will do their duty, I can hardly expect another will take the interest I do.

Besides, such natures as Jacqueline's need the repose, refinement, and cheerful duties of a home — and now for the favor! Next week is my fall vacation, and I want you to ask me to visit you — and bring Jacqueline!

Then, if you should like her — as I do hope you will — well, you know our rules allow us to bind out our girls into good families, under certain conditions, till their time expires; and, if you could find a daughter and companion in my girl, and she a mother in you, how delightful it would be!

But time will tell, and, meanwhile, I'm as sure you'll let us come, as I am that I wouldn't ask this of another woman of my acquaintance!

Lovingly yours,

MAGGIE KENNETH.

Mrs. Kenneth knew well the nature she had to deal with. Miss Patty's face had been a study of emotions, as she read the long letter, and now she had to remove her spectacles to wipe the moisture from them as she exclaimed, energetically, —

"Let them come — I guess so!" and before an hour

had passed, her warm invitation was written, sealed, and on its way to the office.

A few days later Miss Patty, looking unusually nice in her delicate sprigged muslin, stood again on the pleasant front veranda, and looked down the road. This veranda was deep enough to admit of a small table, and two or three chairs, thus making quite a summer parlor of it.

It was near sunset, and the tea-table, deftly set by her own hands, awaited her guests in the pretty dining-room, while Marta, brilliant in a new black and yellow calico, and white apron, was darting about the kitchen in a state of tremulous excitement.

There was a "flurry of dust in the distance," and the depot carriage (prosaic modern substitute for the gayly caparisoned steeds of the old-time story !) came in sight; the next moment it had stopped, and a young girl sprang nimbly out, and turning, gave a hand to Mrs. Kenneth, whose weight made her less agile. A trunk was then lifted down by the man before he drove briskly away, while the two old friends kissed each other, their eyes wet with tears.

"Here is Jacqueline; my dear, this is our kind friend, Miss Barnes," said Mrs. Kenneth then, and Miss Patty looked down into a pair of wistful, dark eyes, and noticed a sweet, frail face, and trim little

figure, in a neat, gray suit, made, as she shrewdly suspected, from an old one of her friend's. She liked the face, and her own smile was so sweetly cordial that Jacqueline warmed to her at once.

Then they all went into the house — the first pleasant *home* Jacqueline had ever entered — turning into the large, square parlor at the left.

It was furnished quaintly, but comfortably, with a bright, old-fashioned carpet, chairs of every style and pattern, but all made luxurious by cushions of gay cretonne, or silk patchwork, a table here and there — a set of low book-shelves, well filled, and a pretty corner fire-place with carved wood-work and shelves holding bric-à-brac and china — the grate being now concealed by a great jar of golden-rod and meadow-grasses.

At the further end, double glass doors opened into the end of the conservatory, as those from the dining-room into its longer side.

Jacqueline looked about upon all this color, coziness, and home-warmth, and involuntarily a little "Oh!" of delight escaped her.

Miss Patty, turning quickly, caught her rapt gaze fixed upon the greenhouse, and asked, in a pleased way, —

"Do you like it?"

"It's the purtiest place I ever see in my life! And

to think o' havin' a gardin right in the house — Oh! I can't b'lieve I'm here."

Both ladies laughed, well pleased at her great delight.

"You shall see the inside of the 'garden' soon, my child — but come to supper now," said Miss Patty kindly, almost forgetting to limp in her excitement, as she led the way to the dining-room.

Here, though really hungry, the child could scarcely eat for the beauty of it all; the singing birds, the broad windowed end of the room, looking into such wealth of greenery, the pretty china and silver on sideboard and table, the dishes of luscious grapes and peaches, the broad, buxom-faced maid, bobbing in and out in such a state of ecstatic excitement, it was all like a lovely story, or some dream from which she must soon waken.

When tea was over she asked, timidly, —

"Shall I help, Mrs. Kenneth?"

"Help, who, child?"

"Her," pointing to Marta, who had just entered, "I could wash the dishes."

"Not to-night," said Miss Patty kindly, "you must rest after your journey," and Mrs. Kenneth, pleased at the thoughtfulness of her *protégée*, said, —

"Suppose you let her wander through the garden and greenhouse, while we have a talk, Patty. You won't touch any thing, Jacqueline?"

"No ma'am!" very earnestly.

"All right, then," (as Miss Patty nodded approval) "go where you choose, only be careful," and the elder ladies passed into the parlor.

They had finished their long, absorbing talk, and Mrs. Kenneth was following her friend, as she went about locking up the house for the night, when each simultaneously remembered the little stranger-guest, who had been given over to the flowers.

They sought her in the glass-covered garden, but could not at first see her anywhere, then, peering around an overgrown ailantus, Miss Patty saw something which made her beckon her friend forward. There, crouched upon her knees, with her head leaning against the mossy bank, was the child, fast asleep. By the light of the lamp Miss Patty carried, they could see that there was a smile of content about her mouth, while on her cheek glittered a tear.

"Asleep!" said Mrs. Kenneth softly, "I do believe she has been thinking of her mother."

"And see!" added the other lady, "she is on her knees."

"Yes, she has learned to pray of late; I have found her so several times. It must have been a happy prayer, to-night," and gently rousing her, they led her, too drowsy to sense any thing, off to bed.

CHAPTER V.

NEW IMPRESSIONS AND FRIENDS.

The next week was like a bit of enchantment to Jacqueline, who reveled in the greenhouse, and the large garden of fruit, vegetables, and more common flowers, beyond.

A new mood had come over the girl, which she hardly recognized herself, one of dreamy, quiet satisfaction.

Relieved from former restraints, she might have chattered with Marta from morning till night, had she chosen, but to her own surprise, found she did not care for her broken speech, and as soon as she had helped her in the daily household tasks was glad to slip off by herself, and dream away the hours in the sweet old garden, now ablaze with dahlias, asters, and geraniums, her only companions being the big, old, tortoise-shell cat, and her own thoughts.

The ladies, sewing by a side window, noticed her one day, as she thus wandered quietly about, now stopping to smell of, or softly handle, an especially fine flower, — she did not seem to care to pick them, though

she had permission, — now shading her eyes to look up into the cloud-flecked sky, with a long, wondering gaze, and, at last, sitting down in the soft grass, while the cat coolly appropriated her lap for a couch.

"It's queer!" laughed Miss Patty, "I never saw Lep really take to any one before, except Bert, and myself. He's the most unsociable creature you ever saw, will hardly take a bone even, from Marta, and he likes a bone as well as any dog; but just see how he appropriates that child — follows her every-where, and climbs over her as unconcernedly as you please! There's something queer about cats; I've always thought they knew more than most animals!"

"The Egyptians thought so, I suppose," said her friend, "at any rate, they paid them great deference, but they always seem to me too sly and mysterious to be pleasant; I prefer dogs — what a queer name!"

"What, Lep?"

"Yes."

"It's Leopard, you know. Bert named him, because he has those yellow spots, but we always call him Lep."

"And how are your friends, the Leavenworths, Patty?"

"Oh, much the same. Mrs. Leavenworth never goes out. I see her perhaps twice a year, when I go to spend the day. As for Bert, he's the dearest boy

under the sun! His grandmother just dotes on him, poor woman!"

"Yes, 'twas a sad story, but he must be a great comfort."

"He is, and so's Arlene; well, child," (as Jacqueline, just then, sauntered in, Lep in her arms), "you must like to carry that lazy cat about!"

"I do — he likes me."

"Well, you're about the only one he does, then! I've always thought Lep had excellent judgment!" with a twinkle of her eye, which made Jacqueline laugh in sympathy, though she didn't exactly understand, as she turned away and went up to her own room.

This was a dear, little nook which jutted out over the deep front portico, and looked upon the lawn, beyond which the street wound away up a low hill, with more pretty houses and lawns, until in the distance she could discern a glint of smooth water, which she afterwards learned to be a charming lake, whose fine scenery and good fishing made this small town quite a pleasure resort in summer, especially as the city was within easy distance — that same city, though Jacqueline did not now know it, where she had lived, and suffered.

Upon a little corner shelf in this room, whose narrow white bed, toilet stand, and chair, nearly filled

it, were a half-dozen books with gay, but well-worn covers, whose fly-leaves bore such inscriptions as these — "Patty Barnes, on her ninth birthday;" or "Patty, with a merry Christmas from Mamma" — her own childish books, preserved in Miss Patty's usual careful way.

Jacqueline could not yet read very easily, but some of them were in such large type, and had such funny, old-time pictures that she took real delight in looking them over, and sandwiched them in between her saunterings in the garden, and one or two long rambles about the pleasant country town, with Marta for guide—for Mrs. Kenneth knew she could trust Jacqueline now, and did not attempt to keep her shut in.

Then, too, she thoroughly enjoyed the quiet mornings in the greenhouse, when she was allowed to clip flowers for the baskets or designs Miss Patty was preparing on order, or watch the man who came to shower the greenhouse, do the heavy work out doors and in, and carry away the great baskets of bloom to the station, for delivery in the city, or to private houses here at home.

It was altogether too delightful to last, and when on Friday evening as they all sat out on the piazza, she heard Mrs. Kenneth say, with a sigh, —

"It's been such a lovely visit! I can't bear to think of going back to-morrow."

Jacqueline audibly echoed the sigh.

Miss Patty looked up.

"I can't bear to have you, Maggie; but my child, are you sorry to go, too?"

"Yes'm, very sorry."

"And you are not lonely here, without any young folks about?"

"There isn't much good in young folks, if you can't speak to 'em!" said Jacqueline a little sharply, for it was the one thing which had cut deepest at the school.

Miss Patty laughed.

"Sure enough! Supposing you stay here, then?"

"Here?" The child had never heard a lisp of her friend's plans for her, and did not, indeed, suppose she could leave the school, so she added mournfully, "If I only could!"

"You may," said Mrs. Kenneth, calmly, "if you like."

"I may? I may stay *here* — with the flowers — and all?" cried the excited girl, springing to her feet. "Oh! don't fool me!"

"Indeed we won't, dear," said Miss Patty, warmly. "You shall stay, if you like — but not to be idle. I shall want you to take Marta's place in the work, as I couldn't afford to keep her, too. Besides, she can

do much better on a farm — and you must agree to do as you are bid, just as you did at the school — will you do this ? "

Jacqueline had stepped to Mrs. Kenneth's side, and now stood with a hand on that lady's chair.

"Wouldn't I ever learn any more lessons — nor any thing about heaven ? " she asked, a little doubtfully.

"Yes, you shall go to school every day in winter," said Miss Patty, "and perhaps I can tell you something about heaven, too."

"Because, you see," said Jacqueline, simply, "my mother's there, and I want to go myself, some time." Then her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"I hate to leave you, Mrs. Kenneth, but I'd have to if I went to E cottage, wouldn't I ? "

"Yes, Jacqueline, we couldn't be together even at the school, and I should be only too glad to think of you, safe in this pleasant home."

"Then I'll stay, and be just 's good 's I know how ! " was the earnest response.

"And I'll be good to you — let's shake hands on it ! " said Miss Patty gravely, and, shyly stepping forward, Jacqueline laid her hand in the whiter, but not so shapely one, out-stretched to her — and the bargain was ratified.

A week later, Jacqueline's new life had fairly com-

menced, for Marta had gone, as well as Mrs. Kenneth, and she had stepped into a quiet round of duties that, without being irksome, kept her busily employed several hours a day. Though the work was not hard, there were many steps to take, and of course some drudgery to do, but there was such a home feeling with it all, that Jacqueline was very happy and contented.

One day while dusting a picture in the parlor, she stopped to give it a long, admiring look. It was a pretty water-color, representing two children in a boat, which was secured to a post — the boy pretending to fish with a string, the chubby little girl dabbling a dimpled hand in the water — when to her dismay the cord which held it suddenly parted, and it came tumbling towards her. She caught it with a little shriek of pain and dismay, for the corner of the frame had cut a gash in her head, and Miss Patty hurrying to the rescue, cried, —

"Oh! oh! It is Bert's picture — how did it happen? Why, child, you are hurt!"

"Not much," said Jacqueline stoutly, "and I guess 'tain't broke, is it?"

"No, it isn't broken," (Miss Patty emphasized the improved expression, as she often did to teach Jacqueline better) "but let's see to your head! Here, I'll do it up nicely in this linen cloth."

As she knelt to have her head bound, Jacqueline asked, timidly, —

"Please, ma'am, who is Bert?"

"Bert? Well, let's see!" and Miss Patty laughed amusedly. "Why, he's Albert Leavenworth Amory, the grandson of a neighbor of mine, and the dearest boy in the world! He always comes to see me when he's home, and I miss him every day, now he's away at school."

"At a reform school?" asked Jacqueline innocently.

Miss Patty laughed again.

"Hardly. It's a school for boys, called Elmwood — a nice place. Bert painted this picture; he's a regular genius, I assure you! 'Twas my last Christmas present from him."

"Did he do it all?" asked Jacqueline, with wide eyes. "He must be smart."

"Yes — there! that's all right. I wonder if that cord can be moth-eaten. I must get some wire — it's safer. Yes, he did that on purpose for me, and he calls them my children — says that chubby little girl looks like me — the idea! Does your head ache?"

"Not much," and Jacqueline gave another look at the picture, now propped against the wall, wondering how old was this boy who could make such pretty

things, how he looked, where Elmwood was, whether he had a mother and father, and a great many more wonders, none of which she had the courage to question Miss Patty about, however.

CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND BESSIE.

Miss Patty's rheumatism had been so bad they could not get out to church for several Sundays after Jacqueline's coming, especially as the equinoctial storms had been unusually persistent and severe; but there dawned, at length, a delightful day, in which she felt so much better than usual, that she resolved to attempt the rather long walk; and Jacqueline, who had never been inside of a church door, nor to any religious service, whatever, except those held in the lecture-room at the school, put on her gray suit in a flutter of expectation. The walk proved to be a delightful one, past pretty houses, rising towards the center of the town, which was upon quite an eminence, from which the ground sloped on every side to the fertile valley surrounding it, before it rose again in rolling waves of rich farm lands, swelling higher and higher into the range of mountains so far away they could sometimes scarce be distinguished from the clouds themselves.

Once, they crossed a clear, swift stream, flowing over gleaming yellow sands, and with an exclamation of

delight — almost of recognition — Jacqueline stopped on the pretty bridge, and, leaning over the parapet, gazed down — with that strange sense of familiarity which we sometimes feel in the midst of scenes we are quite certain we have never visited before.

She looked around at Miss Patty with a half-frightened expression. "I feel as if I'd seen it before!" she said, almost in a whisper. "Or else, I've heard it in a story. There ought to be a little girl stepping across them stones, and an old red house, with the chimney fell down, over there."

Miss Patty looked at her sharply.

"There *was* such a house, but it's torn down. Marta must have told you."

But Jacqueline shook her head in a dazed way, and walked on, groping vainly in her memory for *something* apparently so near, yet just beyond her grasp, which would explain this queer feeling. Certainly, neither had Marta told her, nor had she been this way, before. Miss Patty's voice broke in upon her reverie.

"That brook is at the foot of the Leavenworth grounds — Bert's grandmother's place, you know — and they built the fancy little foot-bridge. It shortens our walk some, and I always come this way. The regular street's further that way, and goes by the front of the grounds — it's a grand old place."

Just then they came in sight of the church. It was a beautiful edifice, small, but well planned, and built of unhewn stone. It was now brilliant with wistaria in its flaming autumn colors, and seemed to welcome them with a glad smile, and wide, hospitable doors, as they went up the gently-sloping path to the entrance. As they passed through the vestibule and stepped into the half-lighted interior, a feeling of strangeness and awe, as new as it was delightful, crept over Jacqueline. They seated themselves quietly, the child's quick glance taking in the frescoed walls, broad platform, with pulpit and reading-desk, stained windows, rich carvings, and silent, well-dressed congregation; and a sudden desire, almost passionate in its intensity, swelled in her little heart, — a desire for the decency, comfort, and respectability, which made up the lives of these people. That was what she really wished, though her untutored thought was only, —

"This is God's house; that's why they make it so grand. And these are God's children. Oh dear! I hope He wouldn't be ashamed of me, if He should come in, now!"

A swift thought of Ma'am, Gem Street, and the boys, sent such a strong shudder over her body that Miss Patty whispered, to ask if she were cold. Jacqueline had only time to shake her head emphati-

cally, when a volume of sound rolled through the building, that made her start in her seat, and gaze bewilderedly around.

Miss Patty smiled, as she whispered, "The organ, dear — they're going to sing."

Jacqueline listened, first to the fine melody, changing from rolling thunder to the sweetest piping strains, and then to the choir of well-trained voices, wondering if this were not a foretaste of the music her mother must be hearing in heaven!

If I tell the truth, I must confess that the music impressed her much more than the sermon that followed, to which she listened in a sort of dream, so strange and eventful was it all to her; only understanding, now and then, what the preacher was saying.

But when she went with Miss Patty into the beautiful Sunday-school room, with its engravings, mottoes, maps, and blackboards, its cheerful hum, and rousing music, she grew wide-awake at once.

"Do you want to join a class?" asked Miss Patty, pleasantly. "I always go into the minister's Bible class when I'm here, but that's too old for you. Miss Leavenworth will take you in, I know," and she smiled affectionately at a young lady sitting just before them, whose refined and lovely face had before attracted Jacqueline's eyes.

Miss Leavenworth overheard, and leaned back to answer, heartily, —

"Indeed, I will, with pleasure! — *any* friend of Miss Patty's" — and Jacqueline was duly presented.

So when, after opening exercises, Miss Patty went away into one of the parlors off the audience-room, with the large class to which she belonged, Jacqueline found herself, with several other girls of her own age, or older, clustered about the lovely Miss Leavenworth, and listening to her low, pleasant voice as she asked questions, and explained the lesson for the day.

Jacqueline did not attempt to speak much, — she felt, with an instinct finer than her breeding, that she must appear better when silent, among these ready girls, with their correct speech and refined voices, — but she heard and saw every thing.

The lesson was upon the healing of the daughter of Jairus, and Miss Leavenworth knew well how to bring out all its spiritual significance, as well as to make it a life-like scene before her scholars' mental eyes; and Jacqueline, listening, began to understand something of the divine love and mercy — something, also, of the divine power to save, and to feel how small and impotent we are without such help and guidance.

As she thought of herself, so friendless and alone,

she felt what a great thing it would be to feel sure of this strong, wonderful love — to call this divine Power both friend and Saviour.

Before this, her one desire to grow better had been centered in the wish to see her mother; now, for the first time, a stronger motive came to her, and with it a feeling of helplessness which made her almost forlorn. How could she — poor little Jacqueline Silsby — ever call this great Being friend? How could she ever expect him to give eternal life to her apparently neglected soul, as he had given earthly life to the little Galilean girl?

To be sure, this girl was no older than Jacqueline, herself, but then her father was rich and powerful, with soldiers under him; and Jacqueline had no father, no mother, no home — except a temporary one, of charity.

Her eyes grew moist, and Miss Leavenworth, catching the look, wondered a little. She had heard nothing of Jacqueline's past, and naturally supposed her the child of some distant relative or friend, of whom she had not heard, who had come to stay with the kind, lonely spinster for help and company; for, though the two families were old and intimate friends, they did not often meet. So she thought, compassionately, —

"She is homesick, poor child!" and her voice

grew low and tender, as she told how Christ is always with us, and knows all our feelings, sad or gay.

"Our human friends would often be glad to comfort us, as no doubt Jairus's friends sympathized with him, but sometimes we can't even speak of our griefs; sometimes, too, we are separated from those we love, but the dear Saviour always knows, is always close by. We needn't even tell our trouble, but simply cry out for help, and he is ready to give it." And as she spoke with such calm assurance, Jacqueline felt a soft satisfaction in the thought that even she might win some passing favor from so ready and willing a Saviour.

Perhaps you may wonder a little that she felt so much in that short hour, which possibly brings you little that is impressive, and the memory of which soon leaves you; but you must remember all this was as new to her as a visit to Europe would be to you.

Were you to walk through a street in Dresden, for instance, by the side of some one who had always lived there, you can readily understand that things which the other would pass by unnoticed, as utterly commonplace, would seem very strange and noteworthy to you. If asked about this walk, your companion might only be able to say, —

"Why, yes, we walked to the market and back, and I bought a nosegay of a flower-girl; that was all."

While you would tell of the queer teams, where perhaps a woman and dog were harnessed together; of the strange, steep-gabled houses, painted in dingy greens; of the quaint costume worn by the little flower-girl; of a group of soldiers in their gay dress, — and many other things, which had not even left a passing impression upon your friend, because seen so often.

Thus, what has become an old story to you was, to this street-bred waif, something so utterly strange and delightful that she noted every thing, and received more impressions in one hour, than you might in days, or weeks; and when Miss Leavenworth took her hand a moment, in bidding her good-by, and said, "I shall hope to see you every Sunday," Jacqueline felt that no slight cause should ever keep her away.

"Well, and how did you like Miss Leavenworth?" asked Miss Patty, as she dropped, exhausted, into her piazza chair, and handed Jacqueline her bonnet to carry in, after their warm homeward walk.

"I thought she was the beautifullest lady I ever see!" said the child, enthusiastically.

"*Most* beautiful you ever saw, you mean; well, you're not far wrong. Arlene *has* a sweet face! You know she's Bert's aunt, his mother's sister. It seems odd for her to be his aunt, too, for she's only

a few years older. They live with her mother in the old place ; they're all that are left ! "

" And where are his father and mother ? " asked Jacqueline, modestly curious, and trying to be most correct.

Miss Patty smiled approval, then sighed.

" Both dead, my dear ; he is an orphan, like yourself. Let's eat our luncheon out here, Jacqueline ; you'll find the peaches in a basket, and the cream's in the ice-box." And Jacqueline knew she must ask no more questions.

Meanwhile, two of Arlene Leavenworth's class were standing at a certain gate, leading into a large, well-kept yard, talking busily.

" Yes, but there's something so odd about her," said one. " I don't think she's our style at all."

" And what *is* our style, I'd like to know ? " laughed the other, her frank, blue eyes full of fun, and her full red lips parted in a broad smile over her white teeth.

" Oh, pshaw, Bessie ! you know just as well as I do ! She's — well, she's sort of kitcheny, don't you know ? and I just believe she's a sort of servant girl to Miss Patty — now ! "

" Well, and if she is ? "

" Now, Bessie Randall, *would* you go with her, if she was ? "

"I don't suppose I shall be called upon to 'go with her,' as you say, Lou Talbot; but I certainly sha'n't leave her out, if she's going to belong to our class; it would be a mean shame, whatever she is! Besides, I don't think she's 'kitcheny' one bit; she's really nice-looking, and there's an air about her — I don't know what, a sort of independent, don't-you-tread-on-me way — that I like; anyhow, I shall ask her, and that's all there is about it. Good-by!" And, turning abruptly, she went up the long, winding walk, and into the very handsome hall, whose lofty, shadowy interior must have cooled her down a little; for after a step or two, in-doors, she smiled pleasantly, and, throwing off every trace of annoyance, stepped lightly into a library at one side, whose walls, about two-thirds to the ceiling, seemed made of books.

"Well, Queenie, home again?" asked a portly gentleman, laying aside the book he had been reading, but first slipping his eyeglasses between the leaves to keep the place.

"Yes, papa, and it does seem delightfully cool here after that hot walk! The thermometer must have made a regular balloon ascension since morning. What are you reading? Browning? Phew! Papa, how can you, such hot weather? *I'm* altogether too lazy to dig him out, except in mid-winter!" But she did not look very lazy as she tossed hat and gloves

aside, and seated herself, with her merry, alert air, opposite the very fine-looking man she called father.

"Did you notice," she asked, with her sunny laugh, "that I'm boiling over with indignation?"

He laughed too.

"Why, no; I thought it was only the gentle simmer of a slow stew; and you really claim it is a tempest in a tea-pot! What's gone wrong? tight shoes? or did the choir sing flat? or wasn't Arlene at Sunday-school? or what?"

She laughed again.

"'Niver a wan, my daddy dear'; it's that Lou Talbot!"

"Indeed! And what has Lou done, now?"

"O papa, she's so *snobbery*, — I hate it!"

"That's correct; but you mustn't hate *her*."

"I'm afraid it's a distinction without a difference, papa, for she's *it;* she is, indeed! What would she be, if you took that away?"

"A bright, well-educated girl, with a great deal of music in the ends of her pretty fingers, and a pleasant readiness to do any thing, without sparing herself, for those she calls her friends," was the earnest answer.

"There, papa! I give up! You're right, and I'm wrong — as usual. I'm just bowed with shame — indeed I am! And, I'll own, Lou might be just lovely,

if it wasn't for that; but it roils me from my boots up!"

"I see it does," shaking his head, with grave comicality; "but what's the especial occasion for it, now?"

"I'll tell you. You perhaps remember, most learned but unmindful of fathers, that I was to invite Arlene and the class here next Wednesday to tea?"

"I had not forgotten, most domestic and inconsequent of daughters; and what then? Is there some late prejudice of fashion against tea-parties in October, which has called forth Miss Lou's snobbish traits?"

"Oh no; no, indeed! That's all perfectly *comme il faut;* (how nice to air one's French, now and then!) but to-day dear Miss Patty introduced a new member, — a pale bit of a girl with 'asking' eyes, as your Browning hath it, and an air something between a persecuted kitten, and a princess in disguise, — and Lou objects to my inviting her, says she's queer and kitcheny, and all that."

"Pardon my stupidity, but did I understand *you* were to give this party, or Miss Lou?"

"Why I, papa, of course."

"Then, there is nothing more to be said; if she does not like your guests, she has the option of refus-

ing your invitation. Of course you invite the newcomer; there can be no other way! She is of the class, and therefore your companion and friend. What is her name, did you say?"

"I didn't say, but it was as odd as herself; Jacqueline — Jacqueline Silsby. That doesn't sound exactly 'kitcheny,' does it?"

He started a little, and looked at her as if absorbed and forgetful for a moment, but this was nothing new in him, and when, a little later, he murmured, —

"Silsby; is that so?" she thought nothing of it, for, being a constant student, he was apt to drop away from the every-day affairs of life into profound musings now and then, at which Bess always took the hint, and left him to himself.

She did so now, and, picking up her things, went away through the grand hall, and up the wide staircase, to her own exquisitely-furnished room above.

"It's so nice, the way papa always settles these things," she thought; "what a perfect gentleman he is!" and her face grew tender with the thought.

Few girls bear just the same relation to their fathers that Bessie Randall bore to hers. Having lost her young mother when a baby, she had grown up with him for father, mother, friend, companion, — every thing. They read together, sang and played together (she accompanying his silver flute on her

fine Chickering grand), rode, walked, talked, and traveled together. Having inherited ample means, and being a devoted student, Mr. Randall had always made very light of the luxuries and position which had been his daily atmosphere since birth, and had laid great stress on the wider learning and culture which most moneyed men find little leisure to indulge in; and Bessie had grown up utterly free from false pride, or undue satisfaction over the many advantages of her lot, and with that merry carelessness as to differences in position or caste, which a princess might show, in her calm assurance of being quite above criticism in that respect.

So she often shocked her more conservative mates, and was, in turn, annoyed by what was to her a senseless feeling of exclusiveness in them. And she was right, only she failed to remember that pride has as many heads as the old hydra of mythology, and that her over-riding independence might come under one of these, just as truly as what she called Lou Talbot's snobbery, under another.

Meanwhile, her bright, sunny nature and frank ways made her a great favorite, even aside from her position in life, and few girls queen it more indisputably than did Bessie Randall in the busy town which had always been her home. It was, perhaps, this air of hers that made her father often paraphrase

her royal name, Elizabeth, into his fond "Queenie," the one pet name he ever gave her.

After dinner, as she stood beside him on the broad veranda, taking a lazy look over the sun-flecked lawn, before settling themselves to their books, she gave a pleased cry, and broke away from his side.

"Arlene, you darling!" she cried merrily, springing down the steps, and linking her arm within that of her life-long friend and neighbor, Miss Leavenworth.

"Good afternoon, Bessie! How do you do, Mr. Randall?" was her blithe greeting. "I thought you were 'wearying' for me, as Ginie says, so I slipped over, and besides, I think mother is anxious to have a talk with you, my dear sir; she has a fresh letter from Bert."

"I hope he's well and prospering," said the gentleman, as he shook hands.

"Oh, yes; I don't think she needs either advice, or sympathy, to-day, but she does so love to talk about him!" laughing in her low, sweet way.

"Singular!" was his merry reply; "such an uninteresting subject as that boy!" and all joined in the laugh at his raillery.

Then the girls (for Arlene was only a girl, though wise and mature for her years) seated themselves in the cane piazza-chairs, while Mr. Randall, stepping

into the hall for his hat and gold-headed cane, took his way eastward, to the house of his old friend not far distant.

"How do you like our new acquisition, Arlene?" asked Bessie, roguishly.

"In Sunday-school? Miss Patty's friend? That's what I came to talk about. And first, what is her name — her last name? I didn't quite make it out when Miss Patty introduced her, and the child seemed so shy, I wouldn't ask her."

"It was Silsby, I think; I heard it quite distinctly — yes, Jacqueline Silsby; quite aristocratic, isn't it?"

Miss Arlene looked at her as if in a brown study for a moment, then collected herself, and remarked in an absent way, —

"Silsby, was it? That sounds familiar somehow. Are you going to have her here Wednesday evening?"

"Certainly; she's in the class."

Bessie's manner was a trifle aggressive, but Arlene only smiled.

"You are right. I was going to suggest it. You expect us at six, I believe?"

"About; but you promised to come early, and help see to the arrangements, you know."

"I will; but tell me all you can about this stranger."

"I don't know one thing, only that she's evidently some friend, or relative of Miss Patty's, and I think

that's a pretty good indorsement; though Lou Talbot does think her 'kitcheny,' — 'I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word!'"

Arlene laughed merrily.

"How exactly like Lou Talbot — and Bessie Randall! I've been secretly wondering who had abused you, you were evidently taking up the cudgels so fiercely! I might have thought of Lou!"

"Arlene; you talk as if — as if" —

"As if you ought not to take up the cudgels? No, no, I don't mean exactly that; only, Bessie, do the rest of us justice, I beg, and believe that we don't all stand ready to give our fellow-beings a kick down hill, if they're not exactly of our stamp!"

Bessie flushed hotly.

"Arlene, that's the unkindest thing you ever said! It *can't* be I deserve it."

"Pardon me, dear, I never meant to be unkind; indeed, I didn't, only Bessie, you dear little hedgehog! is it necessary to bristle *quite* so easily? Are *all* your friends deficient in common humanity, or, let us say, ordinary politeness? Didn't your manner imply almost that a moment since?"

"If it did, to *you*, Arlene, I ought to be — snubbed!"

"Which you never will be, good Queen Bess, for every body knows you wouldn't *be* snubbed, so what's

the use trying? But there! that's about as near a quarrel as we've ever come, I do believe; let's kiss, and make up! I want to talk about the choir; Mr. Orton is anxious to enlarge it, especially the female part, the bass is so heavy; now don't you think"—and the girls were soon deep in a discussion which would not especially interest us now.

CHAPTER VII.

TEMPTATIONS AND TEA-PARTIES.

The next day Jacqueline, nearly extinguished under a huge green sun-bonnet of Miss Patty's, was digging luxuriously in the flower beds, when a sudden voice startled her with a cheery, —

"Good-morning!"

She hastily sprang to her feet, and looking around discovered Miss Arlene and Bessie in a pony-phaeton at the gate. They were smiling down upon her from under its big red parasol, and looked companionable and friendly enough, but for a minute she was undecided whether to speak or run.

"Good-morning," she said at length; "I'll call Miss Barnes," and whisked into the house before either could speak.

Shortly, that lady appeared, the mate to the green sun-bonnet on her head, and limped briskly down the path.

"Dear! dear!" she cried, "if you aren't a sight for tired eyes! Come in! come in!"

But both merrily declined, pleading business, and Bessie said, —

"Arlene and I are going to entertain her class at our house next Wednesday afternoon and evening, and would like to see your young friend with the rest. Will she come?" looking pleasantly at Jacqueline, who hung back near the piazza steps.

Miss Patty's face suddenly fell. Here was a complication which had never occurred to her. It was all right that she, lonely, and settled in all her ways, should receive and harbor this waif from the Reform School; but could she, ought she, to introduce her into the houses of her friends, without explaining the true state of the case?

No, it would never do; yet, on the other hand, could she let Jacqueline's story get abroad, and perhaps expose her, poor child! to neglect, abuse, and ridicule, thus defeating the very end for which she had received her into her home?

It was indeed a conundrum, and the puzzle and annoyance of it were so plainly reflected in her honest face that all saw it. Jacqueline, hurt and angry, made some inarticulate sound and ran in-doors, at which Arlene said, quickly, —

"It is all right; we understand!" while Bessie added, sturdily, —

"I see, Miss Patty, she's your servant-maid, but that's no matter! She is in the class, and, doubtless, in God's sight is as good as the best of us, even if

she does have to work for a living; there's no disgrace in that!"

Miss Patty shook her head slowly.

"It isn't just that; I hate to tell it, but I believe I can trust you both to let it go no farther; she's from the Reform School."

Both girls started. This was, indeed, a surprising revelation, and Bessie asked, under her breath, —

"Oh, what did she do?"

"Nothing, nothing, I really believe," was the earnest reply, "only she was found in dreadful company, and had no decent friends, so they sent her up on a charge of vagrancy."

"It doesn't seem possible!" exclaimed Arlene, softly, thinking of the delicate, clean-cut features, and beautiful eyes, which had so attracted her the day before. "Poor, poor child!" and her eyes were wet with pity.

Bessie did not at once speak; she was too busy thinking.

"Miss Patty," she said, at last, "I've a scheme for giving her this pleasure, without a chance of offending anybody. Wouldn't she be willing to come and help me in waiting on the guests? Arlene is going to, and I often ask my friends. If it continues as warm as this, I shall have them sit about at small tables on the lawn, and, as the class is large, this will

give us all quite enough to do, carrying things to and from the house, where the servants will be busy. Then, she can have her supper afterwards, with us, and not feel so awkward as she might with the others ; what do you think about it, Miss Patty ? "

The good lady smiled, evidently much relieved.

"I'll explain it to her. Yes, I think that will be the only thing to do. The child must learn to understand that she cannot be exactly like the other girls, I suppose, poor little thing! and I know *you* will be kindness itself. I don't know as I did just right to ask you to take her into your class, Arlene, but it was just because I felt you and Bessie would be her truest friends when you came to know and " —

"My dear Miss Patty! I'm so glad you did ask me ; I feel honored by your confidence! You can count on us 'through good and evil report,' can't she, Bessie ? "

"Every time! " exclaimed that young lady, with more emphasis than elegance, and, bidding Miss Patty be sure and send her, they drove briskly away.

After thoughtfully watching them beyond the turn at the corner, Miss Patty turned slowly towards the house.

"Jacqueline! " she called at the door. "Jacqueline! "

There was no answer.

"She's out in the garden, probably," she said to herself, thinking still pitifully of the child she was beginning to love, as she went through to the dining-room. She was intending to call her from the back door, when a sudden remembrance of some neglected duty turned her steps towards the conservatory for a moment. Just as she reached the open glass door a low sob sounded from the fragrant dimness of one corner.

Startled at this, she stepped quickly in, and was grieved to see Jacqueline crouched down close to the violet bank, her elbows resting upon her knees, and her face buried in her hands.

"Why, Jacqueline!" she exclaimed, inexpressibly touched by the despairing abandon of her attitude, "what is it, child?" and, stooping forward, she laid a hand gently on the bowed head. Another sob, deep and strong, shook the little body beneath her, but there was no answer, and Miss Patty looked around helplessly, as if asking advice of the listening blossoms on all sides.

But they only exhaled their perfume in silence, and perhaps Miss Patty took the lesson home, for she seated herself, without further comment, upon the edge of the violet bank, and, drawing Jacqueline's bowed head into her lap, stroked it in mute sympathy.

The child wept unrestrainedly at this, for some

time longer, and when, at last, she grew more quiet, Miss Patty said, resolutely, —

"Now, my dear, wipe your eyes, and tell me what it is!"

But Jacqueline, while obeying the former injunction, could not so readily do the latter without more questioning; for she had been too little used to describing her own feelings, hitherto, to have words at her command, now. Little by little, Miss Patty drew her out, her surprise constantly deepening to find this neglected child of a nature so delicately sensitive.

At last, the broken story was told; how Jacqueline had felt and understood the astonished looks of Miss Arlene and Bessie, and Miss Patty's evident embarrassment; how she had also felt the difference in the class, last Sunday, and that it all made her feel just how "horrid" she was, and how she was sure no one would ever want to know her, and there was no use trying to be anybody.

"You'd better let me go back to Ma'am's," she added, with a fresh burst of tears. "There I'm as good as the rest, anyhow. I'm just as out o' place here as them weeds in that bank," she added, aptly, pointing with a passionate gesture to a clump, or two, of sorrel among the violets.

Miss Patty laughed softly, and, taking the hand that had made the gesture, patted it with a gentle touch.

"Think a minute, Jacqueline; do you really suppose, if we should send you back to the old life, that you could be happy there?"

"Oh, no, no!" she cried, and a shudder shook her from head to foot.

"So *that* isn't to be thought of!" said Miss Patty, promptly. "It's plain, too, that you are not happy as you are; now, what is to be done?"

Jacqueline shook her head, helplessly.

"Get beyond as quickly as you can; that's all there is to do! You are growing fast, Jacqueline, growing in every way; your very feelings about this prove it. Only keep on, then, and by and by you need not be ashamed of yourself in the best company. See here, child! do you remember that large fern you saw me transplant from the woods a while ago, which you thought, at first, was going to die, it looked so wilted and yellow?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, come and see it now," and, wondering at this sudden change of subject, Jacqueline followed, her tearful eyes brightening with pleasure to find the plant now a graceful thrifty growth of beautifully-veined leaves.

Always delighting in plant life, Jacqueline forgot her own trouble a moment to admire it.

"Why, Miss Barnes, it's handsomer than ever, isn't it? How pretty those leaves are!"

"Yes, my dear. You see it had to have a little time to get used to its new home. It, like you, Jacqueline, has been transplanted from the mire into finer soil, and at first drooped a little with the change — just as you do now; but, in this warm moist air, you'll be astonished to see what a great, fine plant it will become; just as you, Jacqueline, will, I hope, grow to be a good, noble woman!"

The child's eyes were now shining with interest.

"So I've been transplanted, Miss Barnes?"

"Yes, and I want you to bring all your strength and common-sense to your aid, to make you grow symmetrical and fine! Now, let's look things squarely in the face. You are, still, virtually an inmate of the Reform School, and will be for two years and a half, and, as such, you are not so favorably situated as most girls. Still, Jacqueline, you are not quite desolate; this isn't such a bad home, is it? And, at any rate, I like you, my child!"

"O Miss Barnes! You be good, and it's a beautiful home! 'Tain't that; and if I thought" —

"Well, if you thought?"

"If I thought *you* wouldn't never be ashamed of me, I wouldn't care so much!"

"Then you needn't care, child, for I haven't an idea of being ashamed of you. But now, you must try your best to mend your speech and manners. Don't

say *be* for *are*, and *wouldn't never* for *would never*, nor *'tain't* for *it isn't;* but try hard to do in all things as I tell you. Nothing shows the lack of early breeding so quickly as these little slips of the tongue, or careless indecencies of manner. I see plainly nothing will content you short of real ladyhood, and I believe you can attain to it if you try; but there's something more important even than good manners, Jacqueline" —

The girl gave her a quick, appreciative look.

"I know; being good."

"And loving God."

"I do, Miss Barnes; I do love Him. He's been so good to me; but it's awful hard bein' good all to onct!"

"'All at once,' you mean. So it is! It's trying, trying all the time, knowing, however, that we have but to ask, and we will receive help. But now let me tell you Bessie Randall's plan;" and she unfolded it in a way to make Jacqueline see its real friendliness and delicacy.

"Yes, I'd like to go," she said at last, "but if they dare to laugh at me!" and her eyes flashed through the half-dried tears.

"If they laugh, you will not notice," said Miss Patty, quietly. "A *lady* never notices such things, and why should she? Those who laugh are plainly

the ill-bred persons, then, and so not worth a thought. Just do right, Jacqueline, keep your temper, say little, and I'll warrant you a pleasant evening. But come, now, we must tie up this heliotrope, and remove some of those smaller plants into a sunnier spot. Ah, child, the scent of heliotrope always makes me think of Bert's mother; she was so delicate and refined, yet strong and hardy, too! Try and be like her, child, and you may laugh at all vulgar comments and ridicule."

"Was she nicer than Miss Arlene?" asked the girl, jealous for her teacher.

"Yes, in a way, for trouble brought out all there was in her, and made her patient sweetness something wonderful. Arlene has had only sunshine, and some plants bloom better in the shade, you know. Now run in, dear, and get that ball of twine on the kitchen shelf"—and when Jacqueline returned with it, Miss Patty was so brisk and business-like she dared not ask any more questions.

Wednesday dawned, briskly showery, but, to Jacqueline's inexpressible relief, it cleared gloriously by noon. She did her morning work in an excitement that fairly made her tremulous, and seized every opportunity to run up to her little room, and lay out her afternoon's toilet.

It was a very simple one; the same gray suit, with

a fresh ruffle in the neck; and, as Jacqueline looked it over, a sudden thought of a delicate blue satin bow, which she had seen nestling against Bessie's white neck, came to her mind.

"How pretty it did look!" she thought. "'Twa'n't limpsy, nor creased a bit. Dear! if I had such a bow, wouldn't I be fine? I wonder if Miss Barnes has got any ribbons; well 'tain't, it isn't, I mean, likely she'd lend 'em to me, anyhow. She might, too, I should think; I work hard enough to earn 'em!" and a discontented frown furrowed her brow.

Yes, Jacqueline was, indeed, growing; not only in Christian graces and longings after refinement, but also in that vanity and love of dress which, alas! are too apt to accompany them, it being so hard to keep within the bounds of that decency and cleanliness which are next to Godliness, without stepping over the often invisible line into that pride and deceitfulness of heart, which are so fatal to all spiritual growth. In the old days her rags and unkempt hair had given her no trouble; her life seemed all of a piece — careless, loose, and given over to dirt and degradation; but now, with her true desire to *be* better, grew also the false one to *seem* finer, which might, if indulged, become a sad, soul-benumbing fault. So do the wheat and tares grow in our hearts to-day, as they grew in the days of Christ, and will always

grow, till the evil falls away in the light of His perfect presence, leaving the good triumphant and immortal!

The morning was nearly gone when Miss Patty sent her upstairs for the spectacles she had left on her bureau. As Jacqueline stepped towards this bureau, she saw, at once, that the upper drawer was partly open. In plain sight, just within, lay a gayly-bordered handkerchief, upon which rested, not a blue, but a rich cherry satin bow, the vivid coloring of which gave her a positive thrill of pleasure.

"Oh, if I had that!" she thought, while her eyes feasted on its warm splendor. "I never see — saw — Miss Barnes wear any such;" and, with a sigh of longing, she slipped her hand into the drawer, and touched its glossy smoothness with the tip of her finger.

The touch pleased her quite as much as the coloring; for, as you have already seen, this child was endowed with that over-sensitive temperament we call the æsthetic, for want of a better word, in which beauty and grace seem absolutely necessary to contentment.

Then slowly, as if in spite of herself, she drew the bow out and placed it against her neck, just as Bessie's had been placed.

Excitement had tinged her cheeks and brightened her eyes, and as she looked in the glass it was with a leap of the pulses to see herself so pretty.

"I ain't so bad!" she whispered exultingly. "I could be nice, too, if I had a chance, I could!" and then a temptation came to her, so sharp and strong it seemed irresistible.

She would "borrow" this bow for the occasion. Probably Miss Patty would never miss it. With her rheumatism she did not often climb the stairs to her room, and she might not go up at all, till Jacqueline was home again from the party, when, doubtless, she could slip it back into the drawer before its absence was discovered.

She turned with it in her hand to go to her own room, and it was both curious and painful to see how this act made her look again like the Gem-street waif of a few months ago. The head craned anxiously forward, the quick-glancing, steel-like eyes, the stealthy step, and cringing attitude, all unconsciously expressed the old degradation with startling accuracy.

But as she stole quick glances right and left, her eyes suddenly lighted upon Miss Patty's daily text chart, hung conspicuously on the wall, whose large type permitted her to read with unusual ease these warning words: —

"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL!"

"I ain't stealing!" she cried fiercely, quite aloud, as if she had been suddenly accused; and then a

change came over her. She threw back her head and drew herself erect, the hateful slyness left her face, while in its place came a beautiful blush of intense shame. She stood quite still, looking straight at those words, and her eyes grew soft and true again.

"If this isn't stealing, it's next thing to it," she murmured. "And oh! I was going to be God's child! I know I shouldn't ought to touch this bow when 'tisn't mine, but I did so want to look like Bessie Randall! I wonder if I'd be a *realer* lady if I went without the bow and minded the good God. Yes, I guess I would," and, laying it back again, just where it was before, Jacqueline picked up Miss Patty's spectacles and fled from temptation.

That lady, sitting placidly in her favorite rocker in the parlor below, never suspected, as she took them with a careless "Thank you," what a long stride forward her *protégée* had made.

It was nearly five, and Jacqueline stood before her bit of a mirror taking a last look before going to the party. It was not a perfectly satisfied one, for her innate good taste still protested that the neutral-tinted suit and pale face needed a touch of color to relieve them, though she was inexpressibly thankful that her soul, at least, was fair and free from the guilt of that "borrowed" ribbon, when, after a light knock, Miss Patty entered.

"Ah! all dressed?" she said pleasantly. "And you look very well too; but girls like gay colors, I know, so I brought you these," and oh! could it be? the dear old lady had actually laid the gay handkerchief on the stand, and was pinning that identical satin bow against her neck!

"I declare," she exclaimed, "it's very becoming! You look thoroughly lady-like. Tuck your handkerchief in so, to show the border. Why, I'm really proud of you!"

But something mighty was stirring in the girl's heart and swelling it to bursting. She gave a sound that was almost a moan, and putting her arms around her kind friend's withered neck, gave her the first kiss she had ever offered to bestow.

"Miss Barnes," she murmured, "I must tell you. I ain't good, like you think I am. This morning I saw it in the drawer — that beautiful bow — and I wanted it more than I ever wanted any thing before. I — I took it out to hide it for to-night, and then I saw *that* on the wall about stealing, you know, and I put it back. Oh, I'm afraid you won't ever think I can get to be good!"

But Miss Patty was heartily returning the caress.

"'There is none good; no, not one,'" she quoted solemnly. "Christ himself said that, Jacqueline. But you conquered the temptation: you put it back.

Now I know you are indeed trying. Now I'm sure you can be trusted. We'll try together, Jacqueline, — you and I, — and ask Christ to help us ; " and from that hour some invisible, but not unfelt, barrier dropped away from between them, and the two stood on a more equal footing than would have seemed possible a week ago.

For each was a King's daughter, bound for the same country, fighting the same battles, longing for the same victory; what better could they do than help each other side by side, the wisdom and experience of the one offsetting the faith and strong endeavor of the other ?

As Jacqueline approached the Randall grounds she saw that the guests were already assembling, and, in the afternoon shadows which nearly covered the smooth, sloping lawn, little knots of girls in bright attire were making pictures of themselves here and there, their young voices and care-free laughter floating to meet her as she timidly advanced.

Evidently, Bessie had been on the lookout, for she met her at the gate, with so bright a smile of welcome that Jacqueline's shrinking embarrassment changed into something like easy assurance, as she asked, —

" Am I late ? "

" Oh, no ! just in good time. Come and take off

your things, and then we'll go and arrange matters with Miss Arlene. How nice you look!" she added, as she took the girl's hat, and noted her flushed cheeks and tasteful dress.

Jacqueline was learning fast, for she said simply, "Thank you," and added, "Now I'm ready," with a business air that amused Bessie.

"Very well — but first you must be presented to papa; I think he's still in the library."

They crossed the hall, and, as they entered the room opposite, Mr. Randall rose to greet them. But as his eyes fell carelessly upon Jacqueline they seemed to dilate, and remained fixed upon her, in a stare entirely unlike the usual elegant manner of this courtly gentleman.

"Papa, this is Miss Jacqueline Silsby," said Bessie, a touch of surprised rebuke in her tone.

"Miss Silsby?" he spoke in an abstracted manner, as if his thoughts were far away, "A niece of Miss Patty's, I believe?"

"No, sir," said Jacqueline, promptly, and he listened to her voice with curious intentness, "I am only her — her help. I live with her, and help her with the work."

"Ah!" raising his eyebrows surprisedly. "And where is your home?"

But here Bessie interposed quickly.

"Now, father mine, do put off your catechism, or you'll spoil my supper! The croquettes are frying, the chocolate is boiling, and I'm getting as wild as a witch!"

"Which, I believe, is not an unusual state for you, my daughter," looking at her with an amused air, "but don't let me hinder you — I'll see this young lady again," and, breathing more freely, the girls escaped to the back of the house. The housekeeper and maids were only awaiting the word, to place the small tables out of doors, it having been thought mild enough to do so, — if supper was promptly served, — as the day had been unusually summer-like for October.

In this Bessie left Jacqueline to assist, while she hurried forward to receive more guests — and soon the company were all seated about the little tables, while our three girls took from the maids the dishes handed from the kitchen, and passed them about.

It was a pretty scene — the green, smooth lawn, dotted with shrubs and trees in their rich autumn coloring; the warm setting sun throwing its golden light over all, and bringing out the sheen in the girls' tresses; and the glitter of the glass and silver around which they were gathered, — a pretty scene, that filled Jacqueline with a deep delight.

"How easy it must be for them to stay good!" she

thought in her ignorance, never dreaming of the petty jealousies, heart-burnings, and longings, their gay manners and fine dresses covered. But she had only an instant for this thought, when the girls fluttered down — "like a flock of pigeons," thought Jacqueline, — into their places. Then Bessie gave the word, and her duties began.

It was new work to her, but she kept close to Bessie, who was quick to prompt her by a kind suggestion, when she seemed at a loss.

"Pass the dishes to the left of the person, always; that leaves the right hand free to take the food," she whispered hurriedly, once, and Jacqueline did not make that mistake again.

It was all quite informal, for most of the girls knew each other well; and their merry badinage flew back and forth, making Jacqueline smile brightly now and then.

Several remembered her, and spoke kindly — some watched with a wonder as to whom, or what she might be. Bessie did not treat her as a servant, yet scarcely with the intimacy of a friend — it was really a puzzle. Besides, there was something in Jacqueline's manner, so entirely free from servility, yet so far removed from self-assertion, that one must have really strained a point to treat her ill-naturedly, and these girls were neither ill-natured, nor over-proud.

She kept well in the background, however, and had little to say, and did not again see Mr. Randall to speak with him; but the next day he asked, abruptly, —

"Bessie, what do you know of this Silsby girl?" and Bessie colored a little, with embarrassment.

She never kept any thing from her father, but now was most reluctant to tell him who this new friend really was, for she had grown so much interested in her as to dislike the idea of giving her up.

"And I shall have to," she thought, "if papa knows. He's so particular about the company I keep; that is, in one way. He doesn't mind poverty in my friends, but they *must* be respectable, and of good character; and I'm afraid he won't think this poor Jacqueline is respectable!"

So she said, slowly, —

"I really can't tell you much about her, papa; I think she is without home, or friends, except Miss Patty."

"But where did *she* find her? This is a new thing! where did the child live, before?"

"At — the — Reform School."

"The — *what?*"

"The Reform School at A——."

"But how was that? Was she dishonest?"

"No, no! Miss Patty says not, but she had no

friends, and was living with dreadful people; I don't really know much about it, papa, but I *can't* believe that sweet, refined face belongs to a bad heart, can you?"

"No," he said, slowly, "I can not! Poor, unfortunate child! Bessie, I wish you'd invite her here some time when we're alone; I want to talk with her;" and you can imagine how gladly Bessie gave her promise to do so.

"And to think how little I knew him!" she said to herself, remorsefully, as she pressed her lips to his gray mustache with unusual fervor before leaving the room.

Yet it was destined to be many months before this promise was kept, for not three weeks later the Randall house was left to the housekeeper, Mrs. Feegles, while Bessie and her father were off, in answer to an urgent invitation to join a party, who had made up a charming programme for a winter in the South. As this gave Mr. Randall an opportunity to prosecute certain geological studies in which he was deeply interested, he had been quick to accept.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MEETING WITH OLD AND NEW FRIENDS.

MEANWHILE, Jacqueline's life for the next few months flowed on smoothly enough. Miss Patty and her "child," as she loved to call Jacqueline, were growing used to each other, and there was little of jar or unpleasantness in their intercourse.

Jacqueline had begun school in earnest with the winter term, commencing in November, and was learning with a rapidity which delighted her teachers; while her quick sensitiveness made her exert herself more than would most young girls, to correct herself in speech and manners. Miss Patty often wondered at her readiness to catch little tricks of decorum from those she met, and was much amused to see what a second edition of Miss Arlene she was becoming, in her dress, walk, and conversation.

"They look alike, too!" she thought, one day after Arlene had been to call. "Queer, how imitation can even change the features into a likeness so strong!"

For it was no secret that Jacqueline felt for her teacher an unbounded admiration, while Arlene, in

turn, confessed to a singular fondness for the child, with a vague sense of having known her in some other state of being, which she always laughed at as absurd.

Still, the two rarely met, except on Sundays, for Arlene's mother was much broken in health, and had suffered so greatly in the past that she now shrunk from seeing any one, except a few very old and dear friends, of whom Mr. Randall was the chief. So, when Bert was away, the large mansion was mostly closed, and its life was still, and rather dull; though Arlene never admitted this, even to herself, keeping so busy with good works, reading, painting, and music, that she had little time for dullness or discontent.

She had been to Miss Patty's several times; sometimes for flowers, once or twice for friendly calls. She always had a kind word for Jacqueline, but the child had never yet been to her home, and had no idea what kind of a being Mrs. Leavenworth might be.

As the days grew colder, Miss Patty's old rheumatic pains returned, and Jacqueline was kept almost constantly busy when in the house; but, by early rising, and extra diligence, she still managed to go to school, at least for recitations, thus keeping her place in her classes, while daily learning deeper les-

sons of patience, trust, and all heavenly wisdom. Her mind, soul, and body expanded in concert, and grew more beautiful through trial and care.

But the "shut in" months were soon over, and the spring sunshine was kissing the sleeping princess of Nature into life and beauty once more. It was May, and a Saturday such as school-children love. The early chill of the morning had yielded to the genial sun of noon, as Jacqueline, having helped Miss Patty through the baking, and washed the few dinner-dishes, gladly put on her hat, to deliver a basket of cut flowers for the dear lady, who had added, in her kind way, —

"And you needn't hurry home, dear; it's too lovely a day to stay in the house."

So Jacqueline tucked her portfolio and box of drawing pencils under her arm, determined to try and sketch a view she greatly admired; for the three hours a week which the public school she attended gave to drawing was already proving that she had no mean talent that way.

She went down the path with a blithesome tread, and a bright, rosy face, whose expression was as unlike the old Jacqueline as possible. The air was perfect, the luscious odor from her basket intoxicated her senses, and the feeling that she was loved and cared for, fully trusted, and freely given this beauti-

ful afternoon for her own pleasure, filled her heart with rapture.

"God is good to me!" she thought. "I shall love and serve him always. How little I thought, that dreadful day I was arrested and put in jail, what good would come of it all! Then, I hated every body — oh! *how* I hated them! and to-day I could love the whole world; yes, even Mike and Nick! I'd help them, if I could, for it must be because they don't know what it is to be good that they act so; if they knew, they'd shrink from the old life, just as I do."

She left her basket at a pretty house near the Randall's, and passing by the latter place, a little later, was pleased to see that doors and windows were open again, showing that its occupants must have returned. She lingered a little, hoping to see some one, when Bessie's voice came from behind some shrubbery — "Ah, Jacqueline!" and a moment later she was dashing through the gate.

Mr. Randall followed more slowly. They were evidently about to start for a walk, somewhere, and Bessie, kissing Jacqueline in her frankly cordial way, said merrily, —

"I'm so glad to be home again that I expect every body to go into ecstasies over me!"

Jacqueline laughed as merrily as she. Her old,

painful shyness was rapidly disappearing, and she was growing in this new atmosphere like the fern in the greenhouse.

"I am as glad to see you as you are to get home. The house has looked so lonesome I've felt like crying, every time I went past."

Then she turned to greet Mr. Randall, who had reached them, and who gave her the same intent examination as when he first met her.

"You look well, my child," he said benignly. "Evidently our sharp northern air is good for you, though we old folks do think we must run off to the South in winter; eh, Queenie? And how is our good Miss Patty?"

"Very much better, thank you sir, — she is hardly lame at all this weather."

"That's good — very good! We must give her a call soon, Bessie."

"Yes, indeed. We're going now to Mrs. Leavenworth's, Jacqueline, and we hope to meet Bert there, bless him! An epidemic broke out in school, a week ago, so that they've had to close for the rest of the term."

"Will he have it?" asked Jacqueline anxiously, but more concerned for Miss Arlene than himself.

"We hope not. They've been very careful to keep

the sick by themselves, and Bert's one of those lucky boys who always get off easy. No, I don't believe he'll have it, do you, papa?"

"We'll hope not, at any rate" — and, with a few parting words, Jacqueline passed on, as they were to take the opposite direction, to the Leavenworth's.

Mr. Randall looked after her. "Strange!" he muttered, "there's something; then, the name — Bessie, I do wish you'd invite her to our house, soon; I really would like to ask her some questions."

"To be sure, papa; but what is it? You always act so queer when you see her."

"Do I? well, I feel queer! I don't know — I can't tell just what, or how it is; but — you don't remember Bert's mother?"

"Not at all, papa. Why, I was a mere baby; don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes, to be sure!" and he relapsed into one of those brown studies which Bessie had learned never to interrupt.

Meanwhile, Jacqueline found the place she wanted — a bit of a nook in a tangle of vines, through an oval opening in which was a limited view of a corner of the lake, with some willows, now in their delicate spring green, overshadowing it, while the outline of distant mountains just shaded the horizon line. Just

such a bit as artists love, and one Jacqueline had discovered by accident, and in which she felt all the pride of proprietorship.

To-day, she was delighted to see that one or two cows were standing in the shade-flecked water, putting the finishing touch to the picture, and she hastened to get at work while they should be in position. She was deeply absorbed, and working with almost feverish haste, when the murmur of approaching voices intruded upon her attention.

She felt impatient at being disturbed, but not at all alarmed; probably the persons, whoever they were, would not even see her in her vine-shaded retreat, but she did hope they would go away and not bother her long.

But they came nearer, and one voice spoke out more sharply, with an oath, "I tell you, Nick, it's got to be done."

Jacqueline nearly dropped her pencil as she listened; too well she knew the voice! It was Mike himself, and the rough, cruel tones made her whole soul sicken with dread and fear. Yes, it was Mike, as usual planning some villainy, and here was she all alone, and too far from help to call out. If they should discover her, what would be the result?

But Jacqueline had learned the power of prayer, and, as she sat motionless as a statue, her whole soul

went up in an agonized petition for help and safety. Probably there is no Christian living who has not felt at some time that his sincere prayer was disregarded, thrust back upon him, indeed, and we can not wonder that Jacqueline felt so now, as, after hopefully watching the two figures she so well remembered pass directly by, and beginning to breathe freely once more, she saw Mike carelessly turn to thrust back a refractory branch that barred his way, and stop with an exclamation of amazement to gaze directly into her eyes.

But if she were frightened, Mike was no less so. Jacqueline had turned pale to the lips, and her eyes were so dilated with terror that superstitious Mike felt sure he was actually beholding a ghost — the ghost of one he had loved to tease and torment — Jack. But her smothered shriek at finding herself discovered, thoroughly undeceived him, and with one leap forward he caught her by the wrist and dragged her out into the open, where Nick stood, too astonished to make a sound.

"What the —!" he muttered, looking her all over, and bursting into a cruel laugh.

"Well, if these ain't the togs! But you're Jack, all the same; you can't fool me! So you've got loose, and are livin' in clover, eh? Nice way to treat old friends, that! Where'd you git so much fuss an'

feathers, and *how'd* you git it? That's what I wants to know, eh, Nick?"

The other nodded and drew closer, while Jacqueline cowered away from them both with an awful sense of helplessness and horror. Her lips were stiff, her breath came in painful gasps, she was utterly incapable of speaking, and her evident terror angered the boys.

"Speak up, can't you?" muttered Nick. "We ain't agoin' to hurt you! Ben't you our old pard, you fool? What ails you?"

At last she found her voice.

"Oh, boys, don't!" she said brokenly. "I didn't run away. I've got a home. A lady took me, and she gave me these clothes. I'm trying to be good now: I don't steal!" and she shuddered.

"Oh! she don't, eh? The pretty, pious doll! See, Nick, she's got religion, *she* has! and she's gone back on her old friends, hang her!" Then shaking her fiercely, "Oh, you're a nice one, you are! P'raps you think we'll let you off on that; not much! If you've got in with them risterkrats you kin give us a few pointers, likely, and that's jest what we're arter, eh, Nick?"

"Oh, don't, please don't! You hurt my wrist!" she begged pitifully. "Do please let me go, Mike! I don't know any thing to tell you, indeed I don't. Miss Patty's poor herself, and"—

"Who? Who's that?"

"She's the lady I live with; but you mustn't do any thing to her. She's lame, and she's poor, and she's good, oh, so good! Mike, if you'll let me go, I'll never tell I saw you, and you can go away before anybody knows" —

"Knows! Knows what? Ha! you heard us, did you? You know our plans," with a fierce oath. "Now you sha'n't go, anyhow, till we've got this thing settled. Sit down there," pushing her rudely back upon the grass, "and, Nick, you keep a close watch, and have your pop ready in case we need it. Hate to treat an old friend this way, to be sure" — grinning ironically, "but w'en they turns traitor it's wot they must expect;" and he leaned against a tree and eyed her savagely.

Jacqueline's heart died within her. It must be all a mistake, there was no God, no heaven, and she was left alone to bear the gibes and insults, perhaps even the cruelties of these wretches.

She looked from one to the other. Mike wore his keenest, most ironical look, and Nick the air of half-frightened deference, which he always paid to his comrade in his greatest villainies. She knew she could expect no mercy from either.

"Now," said Mike solemnly, "seeing you've heard it all, you've got to tell us what we can't find out

ourselves; and that is, where that old coon of a Randall keeps all that plate he took away from the bank-vault to-day."

Jacqueline started in astonishment, but something of her old courage was coming back to her now, so she only said, —

"Do you mean the Randall on Chestnut Avenue?"

"That's the chap, yes!" and as he spoke a swift thought came to Jacqueline of the day she had helped Bessie to wait on the class, when a certain closet having been left open in the dining-room, she had noticed its velvet-lined shelves, all a-glitter with silver. She remembered, too, how thick the door was, and that it shut with a snap when some one inadvertently ran against it; and how it could not be opened again until the housekeeper had been sought out, and came and unlocked it with a peculiar key she carried, along with others, on a steel ring. But even as she thought all this in a flash, a dogged look stole over her face, and she shut her lips firmly together.

"Well," said Mike impatiently, "be you agoin' to blow or not? Fur, ef you're livin' with that Miss Patty, you kin blow, thet's certain. I've got them risterkrats down fine, and she's one o' them, ef she is poor — sorter poor relation or suthin'; but she visits 'em, an' I'll bet you do too; now, tell us what you knows."

"I can't tell you any thing; I never was in the house but once," said Jacqueline, firmly.

"Bosh! tell, or I'll make you! Onct is enough fur a sharp gal like you. Now speak up, Jack, and be quick about it too! You mind Ma'am's way o' gettin' at the fac's?" and, with a brutal leer, he began deliberately cutting down a small sapling, and stripping it of leaves and twigs.

Jacqueline grew deathly pale with apprehension. She knew what a merciless beating meant, and, that Mike's would be even worse than Ma'am's, she felt certain as she watched him. He not only had more strength in his stout young arm, but more cruelty in his fierce, untrained nature. Ma'am had been a mother once, and thus could relent when her anger died down; but Mike, never! Still, Jacqueline did not speak. The memory of Bessie's kiss was warm on her lips; the thought of her frank, sunshiny smile still cheered her heart, while Mr. Randall's kind tones lingered in her ear. Could she betray her best friends? Could she thus requite all Miss Patty's love and care?

"I'll die first!" she cried fiercely, speaking out her thought with unconscious vehemence, as she sprang to her feet. "I tell you, these people are my friends; they've given me the first kind words I ever knew; they've made me believe in God and heaven, and taught me to hate sin and the old life. No, I

won't tell you a thing, Mike, not if I die for it; and I don't believe God will let you hurt me!"

"Don't, eh? We'll see about that!" and his face grew harder as he bent the sapling between his two hands to try its power, and then brought it down through the air with a cruel-sounding swish. "Nick, you hold her, while I tie her to that tree. We'll see how my lady's fine togs 'll look in a few minutes from now! 'Twon't take long to make rags o' that gownd!"

Nick already had firm hold of her, and Jacqueline felt she could not escape; they were hemmed in by thickets of vines, and undergrowth, which would impede her every step should she attempt to run. Something of the courage which comes to the martyr came to her now.

"If they kill me, I'll be dying for the right," she thought, "and God will understand. I thought He would save me, but Miss Arlene says He knows better than we, and this may be best in some way."

Nick, meanwhile, though he held her firmly, felt a new sensation tugging at his heart-strings. He had always liked Jack in the old days, and to see her now grown so fine and pretty, and standing here brave and true, made him turn sick at the thought of hurting her. But his habit of implicit obedience to Mike was strong upon him, so he only looked the

"Hold on, Mike! Give her a minute, can't you, to make up her mind?" — Page 115.

pity he felt, but dared not relax his hold. He did speak, however, —

"Hold on, Mike; give her a minute, can't you, to make up her mind? She'll come 'round yet; you know you never could drive Jack. Now come, Jacky, tell us wot you know; thet's a good gal! Mike's only a-bullyin' ye!"

Even as he spoke the words, there came a clear, boyish whistle from the underbrush at their right, then a crashing of twigs, and a great dog, followed by a fine, tall, handsome lad, carrying a gun, sprang into the midst of the strangely-assorted group.

Jacqueline gave a sudden cry of "Help! help!" Mike yelled "Bolt!" and leaped for the thicket, followed by Nick, while the dog, with a savage growl, followed close at their heels.

The lad looked about him, bewildered.

"Shall I shoot them? What is it? Are you hurt? How dreadfully pale you are! What shall I do?"

"Stay with me!" gasped the girl. "Let 'em go. They frightened me dreadfully, but I'm not hurt; oh, please take me safe home!"

"To be sure; but where's that?"

"At Miss Patty's; Miss Barnes's, you know. I" —

"What? You don't say! Then you must be Jacqueline!"

"I am."

"And I'm Bert. I know all about you from Aunt Arl. Well, if this isn't a lark!" and, taking her hand, the boy gave it a shake that was almost too hearty for comfort.

Jacqueline laughed, nervously.

"I'm *so* glad to see you! They frightened me so! You see I was sketching" —

"*Do* you sketch? That's jolly! So do I. And these tramps came along and frightened you? To be sure — the wretches! Did they say any thing? Didn't one of them have hold of your arm?"

"Y—es. They were asking me about some house, and I couldn't tell, and" —

"Yes, I see, poor thing! Their rough ways nearly scared you to death! Was it some direction they were asking?"

"N—no. Yes — that is" —

"Well, well, never mind! You're too upset to remember, of course. Here's your sketching-paper," picking up a piece that had fluttered near them.

"My portfolio's in there, too," she said, pointing to the nook where she had been sitting, and Bert soon found it.

"You look better now," he said, gazing at her critically, as he picked up her hat and set it on her head. "Do you think you can walk home?"

"Yes, indeed, I'm all right now!" and she was soon following him at a good pace through the crashing undergrowth.

Presently Bert's pointer joined them, with a strong expression of whipped-dogism subduing his whole person, and the boy gave a hearty laugh at sight of him.

"Do see the discouraged droop of those ears and that tail!" he cried. "The tramps have evidently beaten him off. Poor Chriss! it's a shame, so 'tis!"

The dog received his sympathy with a brighter look and furious wagging of the tail, while Jacqueline gratefully patted his head, feeling that he had taken the whipping intended for herself. But in her soul was a deeper gratitude. God had heard, and answered! She thought she could never doubt him again; little knowing, simple child, that such doubts are enemies which must be met and conquered daily, and seem often but the stronger after every battle!

Bert was a good talker, with something of Bessie's frank, easy air, and, without being in the least forward or pedantic, showed plainly that he had read and studied to some purpose.

Seeing that Jacqueline was still too nervous to answer easily, he began looking over her sketch-book, making kindly comments here and there.

Jacqueline had tried her pencil, or crayons, upon

nearly every thing in and about the cottage, and Bert was greatly amused at a pencil sketch of Miss Patty looking for her glasses, while they calmly reposed upon the top of her head. The kindly face, with one anxious line between the eyes, and the flurry in her movements were well brought out.

"It's perfect!" he cried. "Dear me! I'll have to look to my laurels, Jacqueline! And you've only taken lessons in school, you say? I declare, you make me ashamed of myself!"

"Oh, no!" cried Jacqueline, "I never could begin to do any thing so fine as that picture you made for Miss Patty — the children in the boat, you know."

"Pshaw! did she tell you I did that? But it's only a copy you see, anybody can do those. Now, this of yours is nature; you can be more proud of this than of a dozen such fine pictures."

But Jacqueline looked at him, only half comprehending. She was still densely ignorant in all the true principles of art, and thought this merely a compliment. But she very much enjoyed the talk, and felt easier in Bert's companionship than even in that of Bessie. For one thing, she had always been more used to boys than girls; then too, the manner of their meeting had dispelled all embarrassment, his fortunate appearance bringing such entire relief that she

felt for him, at once, a deep gratitude and sincere friendliness — though she was shy of expressing it.

As they came near the cottage (for Bert seemed to think it necessary to see her to the very door) they saw Miss Patty, in her "regimentals" as she called them, busy setting out plants in the flower-garden.

Her faded old calico and enormous green sun-bonnet brought a smile of kindly humor to Bert's face, for he liked Miss Patty well enough to take regimentals and all right into his heart.

Making Jacqueline a gesture to keep still, he stole up behind her, and stooping down, clasped two hands over the big sun-bonnet and spectacles, holding her head tightly against his breast, as he noiselessly laughed back at Jacqueline.

"Ouch! Oh!" shrieked the good lady, "who *are* you anyhow? 'Tisn't Jacqueline, I'm sure! No, I should say 'twas Bert, if I didn't know he was over a hundred miles away this minute!"

"'He has the least wisdom who thinks he knows the most,'" quoted the saucy fellow in deep tones, and Miss Patty, with an astonished exclamation, wrenched herself free, and was soon, in turn, giving him a motherly hug that nearly took his breath away.

"You blessed boy! Where *did* you come from, and what brings you? Your grandma isn't ill?"

"No, indeed, Miss Patty, she's as blooming as —

yourself, and that's saying a good deal! But we had the scarlet fever at school, and" —

"Albert Amory! you haven't got the scarlet fever?" broke in Miss Patty, excitedly, holding him at arm's-length.

Bert bent double with laughter, in which Jacqueline could not help joining heartily. Her life had been so sad that laughter had grown almost strange to her lips till lately, and as the merry melodious peal now joined his boyish one, Miss Patty looked from one to the other with delighted eyes.

"Bless my heart! but you gave me a turn, Bert; and scarlet fever's no laughing matter, I can tell you, you thoughtless crickets!" shaking her finger at them both. "But I *am* glad to see you, my boy, and no mistake. Let's have tea on the porch, Jacqueline, it's so nice and warm; and, Bert, I've got some strawberry jam left, on purpose for you!"

"Of course you have, Aunt Patty, and I can get outside a whole jar of it in about three minutes, I'm so hungry."

"But how did you and Jacqueline get acquainted?" she stopped in the hall-door to ask, looking back and fanning herself with the green sun-bonnet.

"Oh! 'twas a regular adventure — tramps, dogs, and sketching-books. Let's have supper, and then we'll tell you all about it." And without more words,

Bert pushed her gently in-doors, and began dragging out the small table, with rounded leaves, that stood in the hall, while Jacqueline ran delightedly for the cloth and plates. The old lady, all in a flutter, with her half-limp and flapping sun-bonnet, brought out cake and jam, and gathered the few flowers which always graced the simple cottage meals.

They drew up cozily about the small round table, and after Miss Patty's reverent blessing, Bert told in his droll way the story of the afternoon as seen from his own stand-point, which was simply that Jacqueline, having been sketching alone, was rudely interrupted and roughly questioned by two tramps.

"Nothing but boys, but big, hulking, ugly-looking fellows, aunty, who had nearly frightened her to death, but ran like the cowards they were as soon as they saw me with Chriss and the gun."

"Dear, dear!" cried Miss Patty, "you mustn't ever do that again, Jacqueline. It isn't safe to go off in those lonely places without some companion."

"No, ma'am," said Jacqueline meekly.

"Never mind, Jacqueline," put in Bert, "I'll go with you. I know some fine bits for sketching. Did you ever do sepia?" and the talk drifted into art again.

As for Jacqueline, she never thought of telling the real story of the afternoon, for, feeling positive the

boys would now leave town at once and go back to the city and Gem Street, — only an hour's ride by rail, — there was no need to tell. Her life of constant repression hitherto had made it seem a strange and well-nigh impossible thing to relate her personal experiences, unless spurred by some necessity such as she would have felt had she not been certain their design of robbing Mr. Randall's house would now be abandoned.

CHAPTER IX.

A PICNIC, AND BERT'S STORY.

As the pleasant days followed each other in quick succession, Jacqueline saw a great deal of both Bert and Bessie, for they were at the cottage nearly every day. She did not, however, go to their houses, because this was Miss Patty's busiest time, when she needed her help every moment out of school-hours. In fact Jacqueline might have had to go back to the old method of attending recitations only, but for her two friends. Protracted sickness had closed Bert's school for the summer, and he threw himself, heart and soul, into the out-door work of gardening for his old friend, whenever he was not out gunning with Chriss, or riding his mustang Jocko; and nearly every afternoon, when Jacqueline hurried home from school, she found him with Bessie and Miss Patty hard at work digging, raking, or weeding in the fresh, moist soil. Then she would join them, and they would keep up as jolly a clatter as the blackbirds on the old elm at the foot of the garden.

Miss Patty, as brisk as anybody, was not the slightest restraint upon their fun, for all loved the

blessed old maid, whose heart could never grow old, however decrepit her poor body might become. Peaceful happy days, which drew them together as months of more formal intercourse could not have done! Bessie had the more leisure, because her father was off on one of his frequent geological surveys in Vermont. Bert also had little to do, because the ladies at the Leavenworth house were mysteriously busy in a way that hinted strongly of a wedding some day. So the two were free to do pretty much as they liked, which seemed to be mostly running to and from the cottage.

Before it seemed possible, June was nearly gone, bringing the closing exercises of the school-year. Jacqueline had been steadily making friends in her classes, for, besides being a good scholar, she had pleasant ways and real worth; and the old whispered stories of her obscure origin were being half-forgotten, while her friendship with Bert and Bessie helped to put her on an almost equal footing with the most favored of her schoolmates.

Of course there were a few who made "society," dressing, party-giving, etc., the chief end of life — among whom was Lou Talbot. With these Jacqueline could have little in common, for she had neither time nor inclination for such gayeties. But the teachers and the best of the scholars all liked the girl who

had made more progress in one year than many of them in four.

When, therefore, a picnic was talked up at school, to take place the Saturday following Friday's closing exercises, there was no question of Jacqueline's being tolerated: she was, indeed, both consulted and deferred to in all the arrangements.

"It will be delightful!" she cried enthusiastically, as the little group she was with lingered a moment on the corner. "But I may not be able to go. Miss Patty couldn't attend, and she may not like to spare me."

"Oh, you must!" came in chorus. "She can't be so cruel! It'll be a perfect shame if you can't go!"

"No, no, not a shame, only a disappointment; and dear Miss Patty couldn't be cruel to save her life!" laughed Jacqueline, as she went on; but she couldn't help thinking of the difference between her assured place and home now, and the lonely strangeness of that afternoon at Bessie's, only six months ago.

Her eyes grew moist with happy tears, while a flood of sweet gratitude filled her heart.

"I thank thee, Lord!" she said, softly, with bowed head, and turned into the cottage-gate with a step as light as air.

There were voices in the rear garden, and a peal of laughter greeted her as she hurried around the house,

to find Bert ridiculously arrayed in the green sunbonnet, perched on a ladder tying up vines, while Bessie, between her fits of merriment, was kept busy handing up tacks and strings at his need.

"I'm so anxious about my complexion," he said gravely, with Lou Talbot's own air, turning his berry-brown face upon her, "my skin is very delicate!"

"Then you can never go to the picnic!" laughed Jacqueline.

"Picnic! Who says picnic to me?" springing from the ladder, and sending the bonnet flying through the air, nearly frightening a sedate old scratching hen into fits as he did so.

"I do!" said Jacqueline, and was soon eagerly telling of the picnic plans, while Miss Patty, who had come to the window to listen, at once began arranging for her "child's" going.

But Bert put them all aside.

"I've a cuter scheme than that!" he cried, gayly. "I shall call for Aunt Patty at 8:30, in my T-cart, and take her to spend the day with grandma, — you don't know how many times she has 'wearied' for you lately, aunty (as Ginie says); then, Jaca, by nine we can be ready to join the procession to Oak Grove."

"Still in the T-cart, Bert?"

"The same, my lady. I don't say any thing to you, Bess, because you're so independent with your phae-

ton. Now, don't anybody upset all this, for it's got to be did!"

"But Miss Arlene?" interposed Jacqueline.

"Wait, and I'll whisper a secret! Don't tell anybody but your best friends, and tell them not to tell! She's expecting a certain — somebody, out from the city to spend Sunday, and I doubt if she'll go."

"Ah! ahem!" laughed the girls, Bessie adding, "I was going to ask her to ride with me, but that settles it!"

"Why don't you take that pretty Miss What's-her-name, that's visiting the Gilberts?"

"Mamie Everett? I will! She's just lovely!" And the girls were soon deep in discussions as to what each should take and wear.

Saturday dawned as fair as the first of July should be, and Miss Patty, in her best black silk, a little flurried for fear she had forgotten something, rode promptly away at the appointed hour; the gay little cart having scarcely disappeared around the corner when a roomy carriage, driven by Charlie Talbot, drew up before the gate where Jacqueline still stood, ready to start.

His sister sat beside him, and with a gay "Good-morning," she said, cordially, —

"Come, Jacqueline, it'll be ever so much nicer to go to the grove in a covered carriage, than to depend

on those big, crowded wagons that start from the school-house; don't you think so?"

"Far pleasanter."

"Then jump right in with us, and we'll drive around for Bessie Randall."

"Oh, thank you!" said Jacqueline, quite astonished at this unusual courtesy, "but Bert has asked me. He's just taking Miss Patty over there to spend the day, and is coming back after me."

"Really! How delightful! Then we'll go for Bessie and Fannie Gilbert, Charlie."

"That is nice, for I think Bessie has asked her cousin, Mamie Everett, and she'll be glad to know that Fannie has a pleasant way of going, too."

"Oh, certainly; well, we'll find somebody glad to go, I'm sure," said Lou, looking much annoyed, and they drove away leaving Jacqueline rather grateful and a good deal mystified; while Lou was thoroughly indignant that this effort to win back Bessie's waning friendship, by "descending to that girl she was so insanely fond of," had fallen flat.

They had not turned the corner, when Bert appeared, and soon Jacqueline, rosy with pleasure, found herself by his side in the teetering cart, bowling rapidly over the smooth country roads.

It was fortunate the grove was a large one, this being one of those affairs where old and young, rich

and poor were all welcome, provided they brought well-filled baskets. Bert and Jacqueline were soon surrounded by a group composed of their special friends, and the latter could not help seeing that the mode of her coming had given her an added importance in many eyes; but the girl had grown wiser with her varied experiences, and only smiled quietly at what once would have made her retire into her shell of pride and diffidence.

She liked the young girl Bessie had brought very much, having met her once or twice before. She was older even than Bessie, being fully seventeen, but bright, child-like, and winsome.

The gathering was so large that people naturally separated into groups of special cronies, each making choice of some place to spread their own table apart from others. Jacqueline gathered with a merry dozen, in a part of the grove overlooking the lake, where the boys had fashioned a rough table by means of the side boards of a wagon, and two stumps of about equal height. Over this the snowy cloth was spread, and the contents of the various baskets set out in tempting array.

Jacqueline couldn't help being glad to see that even Bessie's basket contained no daintier collection than her own, while the few bits of quaint old china she had brought were greatly admired.

Bert, with the help of the five other boys, fashioned an ingenious fire-place out of a flat stone and two round ones. Over this they hung the coffee-pot, gypsy fashion, regardless of the smoke which nearly blinded them.

Jacqueline, better skilled in housewifely accomplishments than the other girls, made the coffee, and, when it was finally poured into the pretty cups, over the rich cream and loaf sugar, they all declared that such coffee had never been seen before, and probably would never appear again!

After dinner they made the air ring with laughter, as they asked personal conundrums, and told riddles and stories; while some, more enterprising, went out on the lake, or played croquet with a set they had brought, in sublime disregard of stumps, stones, uneven ground, and underbrush.

They ate their supper in much the same fashion, lingering over it to tell stories, which grew quiet, and even sad, in that hushed twilight hour, and then, in the cool of the long day, gathered up the fragments, and started homeward.

"Well, Jaca, has it been a nice day?" asked Bert, heartily, as they drove leisurely through the purple shadows.

"Very nice; and I thank you, Bert, for making it so pleasant."

"Oh, bosh! I didn't do a thing; just enjoyed myself! Did you hear that story Mamie Everett told, about the poor fellow in the hospital?"

"Partly; wasn't it sad?"

"Horribly! I've thought of it ever since; only a little older than I, and maimed for life! No home, no friends, and a prison to look forward to, if he gets well!"

Jacqueline shuddered.

"And I was in a sort of prison, too, a year ago!" she thought, as she asked aloud, —

"How did Miss Everett happen to tell it? I didn't hear the first part."

"Let me see; they were talking about the wild flowers the girls brought in, and then she told about the flower mission she belongs to, and how they visit the hospitals once a week; then she told the story of this boy she saw on her rounds."

"Yes," said Jacqueline, remembering what she knew of flower-day when she was herself in a hospital.

"Didn't she say he was shot while burglarizing a house?" she asked.

"Yes, there were two of them; the other got off, but the owner of the house shot at this one, just as he was getting out of an upper window on to a ladder, and he fell clear to the ground. It's a wonder it

didn't kill him outright, but it only smashed him up pretty thoroughly. She says that, though he suffers intensely, he is very patient, and really, to look at his face, refined by sickness, you'd not think him so bad. Then, too, he obstinately refuses to turn State's evidence against his mate, and so secure a shorter sentence, and I can't help liking him for that."

"You seem strangely interested," said Jacqueline, looking at him, curiously.

"Well, I am," laughing a little. "There's something so pitiful about the whole thing; and then, somehow, I can't help admiring pluck, even if it is in a burglar. He is just my age, too; only think!"

Bert was quiet for awhile, and Jacqueline's eyes were wet; after a little he went on in the hushed tone his voice had dropped into.

"Perhaps I feel differently because I had such a father."

Jacqueline looked up, surprised.

"*Such* a father; how?" and stopped, half frightened at herself.

"Well, at least, he was a very bad man. He drank, and gambled, and broke my mother's heart. Yes, and grandpa's, and grandma's, too! Then he was killed in a dreadful brawl, and I'm afraid nobody was sorry."

Jacqueline made an inarticulate murmur of surprise and dismay, and Bert, as if impelled by something outside of himself, went on, —

"I don't know why I tell you; we never mention him at home; but, somehow, you've never seemed like a stranger to me. As to my mother, she was as good, and gentle, and lovely, as he was wicked. I don't know how she came to marry such a wretch, I'm sure, but he was of good family, and probably appeared all right, at first. He took her south, and I was born in Macon, Georgia. But we never stayed long in one place. He had inherited some property, and they lived in good style till that was gone, I've heard, and then trouble commenced. When I was only two he suddenly went away, and left her at a hotel with hardly a bit of money, and she had to write to grandpa, who came and brought us home. We had been here about three months when he turned up again, and told a dreadfully sad story about having been sick for weeks, and then not knowing where to look for her, and a lot of rubbish! Somehow, or other, he'd made money, though, and wanted her to live with him again, but I suppose grandpa and grandma actually fought against it! Aunt Arl was about seven then, and she can remember those stormy scenes yet. But I suppose mother loved him, and she thought it was her duty to go with him. She used

to say, 'I married for better and *for worse!*' and so they had to let her go. But they kept me, and I've never seen my mother since. Indeed, if it wasn't for her portrait in grandma's room, I should not remember how she looked."

"Did she die soon?" whispered Jacqueline, intensely interested.

"Not for some time. A year after she left, a little girl was born — my little sister" — his voice choked a minute. "You don't know how I've always wanted a sister, Jaca! But after that her letters grew farther apart and then suddenly stopped. I suppose they had got back into the old dreadful life and she couldn't bear to write. She never even mentioned the baby's name (if it had one), but we thought probably she would give it her own — Celia.

"After waiting some time, grandpa grew so uneasy that he started off to find her, going, of course, to the last address she had given him; but found, to his surprise, that there had been no people of our name there, though there had been a man, wife, and baby, of another name, I can't remember what. He felt sure, however, that they were our people, and that mother had had to give up writing because she was too proud to let him know the way they were living — under a false name, and all that. But they'd left there suddenly, without paying in full for their board, and

the woman who kept the house was very cross and surly about it.

"When asked if she knew what the lady's and child's given names were, she gave my mother's, Celia, but said she couldn't remember the baby's; 'twas some heathenish French name, and they never used it — always called her Blossom or Baby.

"So that made grandpa pretty sure, and he tried his best to find them, feeling afraid my father had committed some crime; but he couldn't. All the trouble and suspense nearly drove them crazy, and turned their hair white, too. Grandpa had never been very strong and it broke him all up, so that he died in less than a year. I wonder it didn't kill grandma too; but I suppose there are some people who can't die, no matter how much they want to! At any rate, she didn't, though it made an old woman of her.

"Grandpa hadn't been buried a month when Mr. Randall saw in a city paper that Albert B. Amory, *alias* two or three other names, had just been shot in a gambling den, and was dying in the hospital. So he went there, and sure enough it was that man — I hate to call him father! He was almost gone, but when Mr. Randall tried to rouse him, and find out about his wife and child, he seemed to understand, and tried to speak.

"He managed to say, 'Dead — the baby,' and then dropped back quite gone, and Mr. Randall did not know whether only the baby was dead, or both. Then he telegraphed home, and grandma went on, and they advertised and hunted every-where, and traced them from one place to another, till they, at last, came to a stand-still; all they could learn was from a woman who declared she had seen my mother — grandma had her photograph — in a neighboring tenement. Think of *my* mother living in a tenement! When they went there no one seemed to know any thing about her, and so the search ended. Grandma felt convinced that both had died, and we always think of them as lying together in some nameless grave."

They were both silent as Bert drew rein before the cottage-gate, but as he helped Jacqueline from the cart, she said earnestly, —

"Good-night, Bert. I'll keep your story to myself, but I'm glad you told it. We are both orphans, and though you have a beautiful home with your own relatives, I can't help feeling there are some things similar in our lives which should make us good friends, always."

"Which we will be!" said Bert, shaking her outstretched hand warmly, but evidently too full of emotion to say much. "I'll bring Miss Patty soon;

good-night!" and he drove quietly away, while Jacqueline went up the narrow path, and waited in the lonely, dusky porch, thinking over the strange story she had heard, her heart yearning over that poor mother and child, and over Bert who had lost so much out of his life.

Miss Patty came home in as quiet a mood as Jacqueline's, for the visit with her old friend had revived many sad memories, and the two soon separated to go to their rooms, each to lie awake under the pressure of life's sad realities for a part, at least, of the beautiful, moon-lighted, clover-scented night.

CHAPTER X.

A FLOWER MISSION AND ITS RESULTS.

"SEEMS to me we're growing very gay!" laughed Miss Patty, a few mornings later, as Bessie drove away from the gate, leaving an invitation for the lady and her charge to take tea at her home the next day.

"Aren't we!" cried Jacqueline, merrily; "and what a nice party it will be. Just the people we like best."

"Yes," said Miss Patty. "And now you may leave the work, and go straight to your dress; you'll want it to wear."

"Oh, may I? You're very good, Miss Patty, and I think I can get it done. The waist is all finished except the button-holes, and the skirt breadths are sewed up."

"Of course; and I'll help you. Just find my glasses dear, and see if I left my thimble in the conservatory won't you?"

Jacqueline, having fairly settled the dear old lady, went at her sewing with a vim, for a new dress was a

great affair to her, being in this instance, only a muslin with a clear white ground, and tiny sprays of pink scattered over it; but it was fresh and full, and when she was dressed in it next day, Miss Patty looked her over with great satisfaction.

"Will I do?" asked Jacqueline, archly.

"Yes, my child; if you behave as well as you look you'll be all right," which, by the way, was a favorite axiom of the old lady's.

Bessie came for her in the phaeton, and Jacqueline, after gently helping her in, walked along after, greatly enjoying the fresh, sweet air, and the rich bloom in the deep pretty gardens she was passing. A clear boyish whistle behind her made her look around, to see Bert coming after with long strides.

"Gracious! how fine!" he said, holding up an imaginary eyeglass and looking her over, "is that a new creation, Miss Silsby?" indicating the pretty muslin.

"Rather," laughed Jacqueline, "I'm afraid the basting threads are hardly out yet; do you see any?"

"Guess not, what are they, anyhow? these, for instance?" pointing to the rows of shirring at the neck of her full waist.

"Not exactly. Are you on your way to Bessie's, now?"

"Of course; who else is going to be there?"

"Only two or three — the Gilberts and Mamie Everett, — Bessie's taken a great fancy to that pretty girl from the city, — besides ourselves; that is," — blushing a little at finding she had identified herself with the Leavenworth family, — "I should say, besides your family, and Miss Patty, and myself."

"To — be — certainly! I'm glad to see you so precise. It's nice Miss Patty could come, but grandma can't, I'm sorry to say; it's one of her bad days. But Aunt Arl's coming. She must have something to distract her mind, now George Harper's gone back to town."

"What a fine young man he is!" said Jacqueline, admiringly, "anybody would know he was good, just to look at him."

"Yes, I believe they would. Then, it's a comfort to know all about them, as we do; the Harpers used to live close by us, before they removed to the city, and I think he and Aunt Arl have always liked each other. He's such an honorable fellow, too. Mr. Randall says his word is as good as his bond among business men."

"I should know it," said Jacqueline. "Ah! here we are; don't they make a picture, though?"

She pointed to the Randalls' lawn, where, in two deep wicker chairs placed on a great crimson rug, sat Miss Patty and Mr. Randall, in pleasant conversation;

while, opposite them, Arlene and Bessie lounged in a hammock, lightly swinging it to and fro with the tips of their daintily-clad toes.

The Gilberts had not yet arrived. Our new-comers were made welcome, Bessie springing out so quickly at sight of them as to almost upset Arlene; and Mr. Randall rising courteously from his chair, only to fix upon Jacqueline again that long, strange look he seemed to reserve for her.

Then the young people wandered away into the flower-garden further back, and, reseating himself, Mr. Randall said, abruptly, —

"Miss Patty, has it never occurred to you that your *protégée* looks very much like some one we used to know?"

"What? Why, no — you don't mean?" — and she looked at him, half-startled, half-comprehending.

"Yes, I do! This Jacqueline Silsby strikingly resembles Celia Leavenworth, as she was when a girl."

"Do you think so? Yes, Mr. Randall, I've thought of it myself. It's probably because she tries to copy Arlene, and you know she too resembles her older sister. I didn't suppose any one else had noticed it."

Mr. Randall shook his head.

"One can't copy the color of another's eyes and hair, my friend; and those brown eyes changing so easily to black in any excitement, and that dark hair with the

hint of red when the sun lights it up, are Celia's own! I noticed it the first time I met her. There's another queer thing, Miss Patty; Silsby was that man's last *alias!*"

"*No!* you don't say so!" and the lavender bow on Miss Patty's head-dress fairly quivered with excitement.

"Of course it's common enough to meet people of the same name, but somehow I've felt from the first that that child did not die. There was really no evidence of death, only that disjointed speech, which might have been explained in some other way, had it been concluded; and from Amory's manner, I now feel sure he had something to tell me about the baby, while the word 'dead' referred only to Celia. Still, it would be almost too romantic!" he added, with a smile. "Bessie always calls me an old dreamer, and I believe she's right. But tell me all you know about this girl, anyhow," and Miss Patty gave the meager particulars she had heard.

She had scarcely finished when the Gilberts arrived, which brought the young folks back from the garden, and made the conversation light and general, until tea was announced. As they left the table, Mr. Randall said, quietly, —

"Miss Jacqueline, Bert tells me you are much interested in sketching, water-coloring, etc."

"Yes, sir," she answered, half shyly, "but I know very little about it."

"Indeed! I should have supposed from his talk that you were quite proficient. Come with me, and I'll show you some water-color sketches I brought from Paris a few years ago, they may interest you; that is, if the rest will excuse us a minute."

"Yes, papa," laughed Bessie, "but I'll warn you, Jacqueline, that he's liable to go off in a brown study at any instant, and bury himself in a book so deep he won't even hear if you speak!"

"I can at least leave him buried, and come back to you, then," said the girl merrily, and followed him into a small room next the library, which she had never seen before.

"This is my special den," he said laughingly, as he cleared an easy-chair of books and papers, sweeping aside more of the same sort from the large table which nearly filled the room: "it is the domestic rock upon which Bessie and I always split, for she is constantly insisting upon cleaning it up, while I am kept busy making excuses to ward her off! Mrs. Feegles gave it up as a bad job long ago, but Bessie is as persistent as a rat-terrier, when she makes up her mind to any thing!"

Then he went to a cabinet, and brought from a deep under drawer a pile of large sketches, in both water

colors and sepia. As he showed them to her, gently explaining, and deftly calling her attention to special points, he gradually brought the conversation around to herself, and began cautiously questioning her of her early life; while she, little suspecting his motive, answered as freely as it was in her reticent nature to do.

"You say," he asked, "that you can remember your mother?"

"Hardly," said Jacqueline, thoughtfully; "it is more like a dream, or a picture, just a faint one, of a pale face on a pillow, that kissed me, and a memory of some very solemn words, 'Oh, my darling, I must leave you to God.' I think those words came back to me in dreams, or I shouldn't remember them so."

"Then you think you must have been very young when she died?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you don't remember your father?"

"Not at all, sir."

"And then you lived with this woman you call Ma'am; didn't you know her real name?"

"Yes, I believe it was Grundy, but I never heard it but once or twice; they all called her Ma'am."

"And that is all you can tell me."

"Yes, sir: at least—there *was* one thing, but I don't know as it was any thing either: one day I overheard

a talk between Ma'am and one of her cronies which I think referred to me, judging by the looks they gave me. She said, 'I shall keep the things, and sometime they may be money in my pocket; they was her mother's, and she wa'n't no common woman, I can tell you — she came of high-toned folks.' That was all, and I never knew what things she meant."

He looked at her, and seemed musing deeply.

"Strange!" he muttered. "Every thing seems to fit together. Now," resuming a business tone, "just give me the address of this house in the city where you lived, please."

"No. 13 Gem Street, sir."

"Yes." He opened a drawer in the table, and searching amid its confusion, found a small memorandum-book, in which he wrote it down.

"You are sure of this address, Jacqueline."

"Yes, sir, quite."

"All right; pardon my inquisitiveness! Bessie tells me I delight in questions — ought to have lived during the Spanish Inquisition! Well, shall we go back to the others now?" and wondering much, but not daring to ask a question herself, Jacqueline followed, thinking him the most eccentric gentleman she had ever seen.

The rest of the evening passed rapidly away, enlivened by music and pleasant instructive talk on art,

books, and current events. Something reminded Bert of Mamie Everett's story about the boy in the hospital, and that was again talked over. Jacqueline, for once forgetting her shyness, told how it had always been a dream of hers that some day she might be rich enough to carry flowers to the hospitals too.

"Nobody knows," she added, with a quiver of feeling in her voice, "nobody knows how much those flowers can do for one, unless they've been there!"

"And why should you need to be rich to carry out so simple a dream as that?" said Mr. Randall briskly. "Here are we, within an hour's ride of the hospitals; there are Miss Patty's greenhouse and garden all ablaze with blossoms, — why not make up a party and go to the city, just once, to make somebody else happy as well as ourselves? Come, that isn't a bad idea, Miss Patty, eh? Miss Mamie here shall be our guide; you, our florist; and I claim the privilege of entertaining the whole party, for after our efforts we'll need a substantial dinner, you know! Let's see, we can eat our lunch at home, take the 12:20 train, and return on the 9:15 at night — what do you all say?"

There were only one or two disclaimers, and they were over-ruled, so the original plan was finally agreed upon, the next day but one being selected, if pleasant.

"I don't know about taking my cane and rheuma-

tism around on such a trip; they might nab me up and put me into one of their beds," said Miss Patty quaintly, "but Jacqueline shall go, anyhow."

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Randall, with something significant in his tone, "this is really Miss Jacqueline's party, you know" (and the young girl blushed rosy-red at the honors which seemed quite overwhelming her); "but we can't go without you, Miss Patty, and I insist that you make a special effort to be free from rheumatism, that day!" Which she laughingly agreed to do.

Indeed, when the day came Miss Patty did feel unusually well; so, after a dozen minds on the subject, finally decided to go, just in time to get into her black silk and best bonnet. Mr. Randall, ever thoughtful, sent his man around with the phaeton after her, and the baskets and boxes of flowers, and when Jacqueline hurried into the pretty station-house a little later, all were there, except the elder Gilberts.

"Father will meet us in the city," explained Fannie, "and mother, I'm sorry to say, has a severe sick headache, so can't come. I felt guilty to leave her; but she insisted, saying there was nothing to do but wear it out in perfect darkness and quiet, so I came."

It was a merry party. Bert, as he said, tried to make himself as "numerous" as possible among the

five girls, while the elders visited quietly by themselves, a little apart. Jacqueline was greatly excited, and her cheeks were crimson under her simple but becoming hat. What was the most every-day occurrence to the rest, was to her a great event; and she almost begrudged her attention to the laughter and chat inside the car, so anxious was she to watch the changing landscape without. The ride was all too short, she thought, and a strange feeling of dread and dismay came over her, as they steamed into the great, gloomy depot, and came to a stop.

This was the city where she had known only squalor, suffering, and crime; what might not meet her in its restless, teeming streets?

She shrank close to Miss Patty's side, and eagerly offered her arm to assist her, feeling glad to be near such a true friend; but Mr. Randall had just then offered his stronger arm, and Bert's gay voice rang out, —

"Come on, Jaca! these girls know the way, so I'll look after you," and together they threaded their course through the hurrying crowds, and among the vociferous, though well-guarded, hackmen, till the party, now completed by Mr. Gilbert's appearance, had been comfortably disposed in two carriages.

I shall not give you a detailed description of their visits, for they went to three large hospitals, bringing

a sense of cheer and comfort in their very presence, and leaving many a sufferer with something pleasant to think of in kind, helpful words, as well as to look at in beautiful blossoms. I will speak only of their visit to the third, which they had purposely left till the last, rather hurrying over their other visits that this might be a more leisurely one, as it was here that Mamie Everett's burglar, as they facetiously called him, lay so dangerously ill.

The flowers, being packed in dampened cotton or moss, were still perfectly fresh, and they had been careful to reserve one choice box untouched. After lingering a little here and there, Mamie asked to be shown to Bed No. 16, Ward 5, and their conductor, after a little demur, led them forward.

"He is very bad," he said, in answer to her question, "and sometimes out of his head; calls out for 'Jack' now and then, his pal, I suppose, — and begs somebody not to hurt her; he means him, but gets confused, you see; but when he is himself he keeps his lips as close as you please, can't get a word out of him."

They went down the clean room, not so large as the convalescent ward, or so noisy, and stopped quietly by a bed. Upon the pillow lay a wasted, white, boyish face, with closed eyes. Jacqueline was somewhat behind the rest, with Arlene, and just as

the group parted to let them also step forward, his eyes opened, and turned full upon her.

"Jack!" he cried brightly, with a glad look, "why, Jack!" and Jacqueline, in turn, gave a suppressed cry, —

"It is Nick! Oh! it is *Nick!*"

All looked from one to the other in astonishment, — only Mr. Randall and Miss Patty partially understanding, — as the young girl stepped forward, and laid her gloved hand in the claw-like one, so eagerly stretched over the clean white spread.

"I wanted to tell ye, Jack," he began gaspingly, his voice growing clearer, however, as he went on, excitement doubtless giving him momentary strength. "I felt bad over thet — thet whipping-scrape, ye know. I don't b'lieve I'd 'a' done it; no, I don't — not even fur him! An' sence I've bin here, I've bin thinkin' lots o' wot ye said thet day; thet you'd die first, ye know, 'fore you'd tell! Thet was gritty, Jack, awful gritty! Ye allus was gritty, but you're good too, I kin see thet — an' fine, an' sweet, like a lady. Wot is it, Jack? tell me wot 'tis makes — ye — so" —

He stopped, exhausted, and in a low voice, often broken by tears, Jacqueline went back to the day of her arrest, and in as few words as possible told the story of her gradual struggle upwards, out of the mire

of sin and ignorance, into the sunlight of hope, faith, and happiness. The group had considerately moved on almost immediately, and Nick listened eagerly to the low, pleasant voice, sometimes searching her face with eager eyes, again closing them in very weakness; but always clinging to the little hand that was the only friend's hand that he had pressed since his cruel hurt. Only once he interrupted her. When she lightly touched upon their encounter in the woods, and explained how impossible she felt it to betray her best friends, he murmured, —

"'Twas mean, mean, *mean!* But I couldn't 'a' done it, Jack; I couldn't never 'a' done it!"

She had barely finished, when she saw Mr. Randall coming down the room, and she had only time to whisper, —

"Just trust in our Saviour, Nick; He died for you and me, just as well as for the rich and great; and He'll certainly listen to you and help you, just as He did to me!" when the gentleman reached her side.

"Jacqueline, the nurse thinks you ought not to stay longer with your — acquaintance," (he could not say friend, knowing what this boy was), "as he is too weak to bear so much excitement. Will you come, now?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Randall, I want to tell you, this is

one of the boys I told you of, who used to live at Ma'am's, and was nearly always good to me; his name is Nick."

Mr. Randall took the boy's hand, and said, kindly, —

"Nick, I'm glad to meet you."

"He's tired of his old life, and I've been telling him how I've been helped along."

"That's right — that's right! Nick, I'd like to have a little talk with you myself, to-morrow, if you're strong enough; and here, Jacqueline, are the flowers you came near forgetting."

"Why, surely!" taking the box from his hands, eagerly. "See, Nick! we brought these on purpose for you," and she uncovered the fragrant things before his admiring eyes.

Then leaving them on the little stand where he could see them, they bade him a kind good-by, and turned away, going in silence back to the friends who were awaiting them in the reception-room.

Miss Patty had explained something of the situation, so that all received Jacqueline with tenderness, and appeared not to notice her wet eyes and flushed cheeks.

"Now," said Bert, as soon as they were outside again, "there's just one thing that can remove these harrowing scenes from our minds, and restore our

natural equanimity, which is — dinner! Ho! for the French restaurant!"

All were glad to laugh and let lighter feelings replace the sadness that had crept over them, and Mr. Randall, drawing out his watch, said briskly, —

"A good idea! it is almost six, and we will go at once."

Bert, who, boy-like, hated too much solemnity, was bound there should be no more this afternoon, so made a special effort to be gay and entertaining, in which he was ably seconded by Bessie. Soon Jacqueline, seated with the rest around one of the cozy private tables of the elegant restaurant, was laughing merrily at their jokes, quite her own self again, though an occasional thought of Nick would send a soft shadow over her face.

Then came the swift pleasant ride in the late dusk of the summer evening, and the delightful sense of home-coming, which was still novel to Jacqueline, as they rode up to the gate in one of the depot carriages. Jacqueline cast a loving glance over the pretty, shadowy cottage, then turned to help Miss Patty out, with unusual tenderness.

"That's right, dear; now my cane, please; well, child, we're home again at last."

"And oh! Miss Patty, how good it does seem!"

"Doesn't it? And it's very pleasant to have one appreciate a home as you do, my child."

"I don't see how I could help it, Miss Patty. The key, please; I'll open the door. Don't try to move about in the dark, I left a lamp and matches handy. Ah! here they are," and soon the two were cozily seated in the parlor, while Jacqueline recounted her talk with Nick.

"Well, well," said Miss Patty at last, "people sometimes laugh at the idea of a Providence in every thing, but I don't know how they can. It's mighty strange, if we only blunder into things, how often good is made to come out of evil, in spite of us. I tell you, child, there's a Leader somewhere. But, bless us, it's after eleven; nice hours for sober folks like us. Wind the clock, dear, and bring the Bibles; we'll have prayers and go straight to bed."

CHAPTER XI.

A GREAT SURPRISE.

THREE days had passed when Jacqueline, who was perched on a step-ladder tying up some vines about the porch, heard the gate click behind her, and looking over her shoulder, was surprised to see Mr. Randall coming up the path. She hastily descended, greeting him with a blush of embarrassment that was very becoming.

"Hard at work, eh?" he said pleasantly. "Is the good lady within?"

"Yes, sir. I think she is making up a design in the greenhouse. I'll call her."

"No, no indeed. Let me go to her. I like to watch her at her pretty work," and, as he evidently knew the way, Jacqueline went back to her own occupation, and left him to find it.

She was deep in her own thoughts, and had almost forgotten him, when she heard Miss Patty's call, "Jacqueline! Jacqueline!" and in a moment later that lady appeared in the doorway, looking unusually excited, her glasses pushed up on her forehead, and her cap awry.

"Come, child, we want you!" she said, in an odd tone, and Jacqueline, wondering a little, quickly descended, and followed her to the dining-room.

Mr. Randall was sitting by the table looking rather mysterious, and Jacqueline actually began to tremble as she seated herself near. What had she done? What could it mean? Oh! *could* it be that for some reason she must go back to the school?

"Jacqueline," he said, "I have something to tell you, which I have suspected for some time, but have only been sure of since yesterday."

He stopped, and Jacqueline feeling in duty bound, nodded, though she was growing sick at heart. Yes, she must go back to the school. He had just learned of her encounter with Mike and Nick in the woods, and for some reason was displeased — perhaps he thought, with such acquaintances as these, she was a dangerous person to have among them.

"O Father, help me to bear it!" she prayed inwardly, and listened for his next words.

"You probably have never heard the story of Bert's mother, Mrs. Amory?" he asked, and for a moment she was too dazed by the sudden transition from what was uppermost in her mind to make any reply; while, as if not expecting any, he went on, —

"I'll give you the outlines of her story," and pro-

ceeded to relate, in substance, the same tale Bert had told her, only with fuller details.

"Now," he said, with a keen look, "I have found that this little girl did *not* die, though her mother did; but lived, and was retained by a woman who brought her, almost an infant, from the southern town where her father and mother died to our own city, where the child was living, up to a year or two ago."

Jacqueline nodded again, wondering much that she, poor and insignificant, should be made to listen to this story, affecting only the aristocratic Leavenworths.

"Yes; she was then consigned to the Reform School at A——"

"Just where I was!" cried Jacqueline.

"But only stayed there a short time; in fact, her name is known as — Jacqueline Silsby!"

"What!" Jacqueline sprang to her feet, pale as ashes, and looked from one to the other in hopeless bewilderment.

"Yes, dear, it's true," half sobbed Miss Patty: "your real name is Jacqueline Amory, and you're Bert's sister."

Bert's sister! the magnitude of the idea made it impossible to grasp it at once. She had a swift vision of the elegant house and grounds she had often passed

by, wondering idly, perhaps, if it were as elegant inside as out, but thinking she should probably never see it, as Mrs. Leavenworth was so averse to strangers, — was this really now her home as well as Bert's? was this lady her grandmother? and Miss Arlene, her well-loved, always-admired Sunday-school teacher, her own aunt? It was too wonderful to believe.

And through this confusion of thought Mr. Randall's voice ran on, explaining doubtful points, and showing how, link by link, he had made out the chain of testimony as to her birth and lineage.

"I don't think I could ever have fully satisfied myself, however, so as to have dared mention the matter to yourself and friends, had it not been for our visit to the hospital the other day. I thought at once this Nick might be able to help me, and went to see him again yesterday. He seemed much brighter, and, the nurse said, had had a restful night; and when he found what I was after, was all eagerness to help me. Previously, I had tried to find this Ma'am, but without success, as she was in hiding on account of the burglary; but when Nick was certain no harm was intended her, he willingly told me of all her haunts, and, with a policeman's aid, I soon found her.

"You know this Nick is a nephew of hers, an orphan who has always lived with her. He was

about six when your mother came there to board, and remembers her well, as she was very kind to him in some childish trouble, and thus earned his gratitude and friendship. He said she was so different from the most of the boarders that he couldn't forget her, and described her ways and manners accurately, though she must have changed sadly in looks. He said she seemed indifferent to every thing in the world but her baby, whom she loved with the greatest devotion, and tried hard to keep aloof from the people about her.

"At that time, however, this Ma'am's house was a comparatively respectable one, and it was not until after she came North that she gave up all notion of decency, and kept the thieving den we know of. Mrs. Amory died a few months before her husband, very suddenly, of pneumonia; but though so ill she must have managed to write a few words to her parents in regard to her baby, for Nick says he remembers that sometime during the few days of her illness, Ma'am thrust a letter into his hand, with the command to run and mail it for the sick lady. He was playing a very interesting game of marbles, however, and tucking it into his pocket, forgot all about it, until some days later he found the letter where he had placed it. But the lady was then dead and buried, and the envelope grimy and defaced; so, thinking it couldn't much

matter, he dropped it slyly into the fire. And that was the end of what was, doubtless, poor Celia's last pitiful appeal for help for her babe."

He turned away and furtively wiped his eyes, while Miss Patty and Jacqueline sobbed outright.

"She said she must leave me to God," said the latter softly.

"Yes, I can imagine how desolate she felt, poor girl! poor mother! for even then her husband was off on a spree, and she died alone! Well," he added more brightly, "the good Lord has not betrayed her trust, my child; you have been led in a wonderful manner, and I've thought these early experiences may make you a better woman than you might otherwise have been, — broader, more truly charitable and kind. Jacqueline, surely you never can look upon poverty, sin, and suffering, with negligent eyes, after your own experience of them?"

"Never," said the girl, solemnly.

"So it has doubtless been for the best, as all must be that is ordered of God. I learned fuller particulars from Ma'am Grundy, though it was not until I had threatened her with the law that she would talk freely, but she finally told me the whole story.

"When poor Celia had been buried a fortnight, Amory returned, and for a time was really sobered by his loss, and kept unusually steady.

"Meanwhile, Ma'am took care of the baby, — you, Jacqueline — and grew attached to you in her rough way. Then your father got into bad company again, and died as we have seen. I really believe he meant to tell me about the child then, had he been able, but his disconnected sentence was misleading, and we did not think then that the word 'dead' referred to Celia, but to the baby, or we might have discovered the truth; for, supposing only the child was gone, we searched for a living mother; while Mrs. Grundy never even heard of my visit to the hospital.

"After a while she came North in pursuit of her husband, who had come there ostensibly to find work, bringing Nick and yourself with her. She had an idea your mother had rich relations who might claim you some day, so she kept what few trinkets were left in her room, and let you grow up, much as she would a kitten found on her door-step, because too ignorant and careless to do any other way; and besides, you made her think of an infant daughter she had lost.

"These articles of your mother's are at my house, and you can see them whenever you choose. They prove your identity beyond a question.

"Now, Jacqueline, I am going to see and prepare Mrs. Leavenworth, for I do not dare let her be too suddenly told of this wonderful news; and when I

think you can safely come to her I will send Bert — your brother Bert" — smiling blandly — "for you. Be ready."

After Jacqueline had shown him out, doing every thing in a sort of daze, she went back to Miss Patty, and was surprised to see that she sat in her arm-chair, looking almost dejected, and was still vigorously using her handkerchief.

"Why, dear Miss Patty," she said, kneeling by her side, "you act as if you were not glad for my great good fortune!"

"'Tisn't that — 'tisn't that, child! I feel I'm a selfish old coot, but I can't help thinking how lonesome I'll be after you go to your own home. I've got to depending on you so, Jacqueline, it makes me forlorn to think of living without you."

A wave of feeling passed over the girl's heart. Sure enough, she must leave Miss Patty; leave this peaceful home where she had been so happy. Would it be right, kind, in her to do so? Miss Patty, who had taken her, friendless as she was, and made her as welcome as a daughter; who had never once mistrusted her, but had helped her every day to grow better in all ways, — *ought* she to leave her?

It was a puzzle, and she put it by for the present, with the words, —

"Miss Patty, don't grieve. I promise you no

friends can make me do wrongly by you. I can never forget what you have been to me."

Then she hurried up to her room to dress herself in her neat muslin, and, in trembling expectation, await her summons to the house of her grandmother. She had come down-stairs and stepped into the conservatory to pick a flower or two, for her belt, when she heard a quick, noisy step, and Bert's excited tones, —

"Oh, aunty! where is she? where is she?" and had barely time to turn when Bert caught her in a regular "bear hug," as his Aunt Arl called his long-armed embraces.

"Hooray! hooray!" he cried, swinging her around in the narrow passage, much to the detriment of the plants on either side. "Isn't this jolly? I've got a sister at last! I'm so glad it's *you*, Jaca! Do you know, I've liked you from the first minute I saw you, so frightened in the wood? Oh, won't we have good times!" and with the last words, he swung her through the door and before Miss Patty's chair.

"You don't act half glad, aunty," he said suddenly, stopping in front of her, "why don't you get up and dance too?"

She joined his laugh at the words.

"Well, I guess my feet and my heart are both too

heavy, Bert!" she said, with a shake of her head. "You don't seem to think that what's your gain is my loss."

"Surely! I never thought of that, I declare, Aunt Patty. How are we going to fix that up? But see here! You're to come to tea, now; grandma says so. I'm to take my sister (see how my bosom swells with pride at that word!) over first, and pretty soon come back for you. Now, don't refuse! we won't take 'No' for an answer."

"Wait a minute then, Bert, I must get her things," said Jacqueline, starting off upstairs in exactly her usual manner, and soon she had arranged every thing so that Miss Patty might have as little trouble as possible.

The old lady looked at Bert significantly. "Do you wonder I dread to lose her?" she whispered.

"Do you wonder we want to have her?" he whispered, in return, as he followed Jacqueline from the room.

She rode beside him very quietly in the teetering little cart, and Bert did not venture to interrupt the thoughtful mood which was plainly shown in the expression of her fair young face. She trembled a little as he turned into the drive, and finally lifted her out, before the door of the elegant house, which loomed tall and massive before her. She felt so

small and insignificant here, all the old shyness seemed to come over her like a veil.

But Bert took her hand and led her up the broad stone steps, then, turning as he opened the door, said with feeling, "Welcome home, sister!" giving her hand so warm a clasp as to infuse new courage into her faint heart.

They entered the lofty hall, and crossed its waxed floor to a double archway on the left, where they passed between rich curtains into a large and elegantly furnished room. Beyond, through other hangings, was a smaller and brighter one, where people were sitting, engaged in earnest conversation.

In a large crimson chair, dressed in mourning garments, sat a beautiful old lady, with snow-white hair, who constantly pressed her handkerchief to her eyes. Opposite, was Mr. Randall, and near by Arlene and Bessie.

The new-comers made no sound as they stepped lightly over the heavy Wilton carpet, until Bert, drawing the curtain a little aside, announced gravely,

"Grandma, this is my sister Jacqueline."

The old lady half rose, supporting herself by the arms of her chair, and looked piercingly at the slender girl in her light dress, framed in the curtained archway. Jacqueline's eyes were wistful and tender

as she met this gaze, and something for which we have no name leaped from heart to heart.

Mrs. Leavenworth held out her arms, —

"My daughter! It is my Celia over again!" she cried; and, as Jacqueline went swiftly forward, folded her in an embrace of perfect love and certainty of recognition.

Mr. Randall and Bert turned hastily away to hide the emotion they could not control; while Arlene and Bessie, between sobs and laughter, hastened to add their embraces and loving words to the elder lady's, and for a time all was a confusion of emotions, so exquisite as to verge upon pain.

Little by little they grew calmer, and Mrs. Leavenworth, keeping tight hold of Jacqueline's hand, drew her to a seat close by, and gave her frequent loving glances, reveling in the beauty and refinement she had not dared to hope for, after hearing her sad story.

After a while Bert returned for Miss Patty, and her entrance brought them down to earth again. While the elder ladies were exchanging greetings, Arlene said to Jacqueline, —

"Come, my sweet niece, don't you want to look over your new home?"

Jacqueline, blushing shyly, rose to follow, but her grandmother held out a detaining hand.

"You're not going away, dear?"

"Only with Miss Arlene to see the house, ma'am" —

"Miss Arlene! ma'am! Is that the way you speak of your relatives, my child?" she asked reproachfully.

"I mean — Aunt Arlene, and — grandmother," she corrected herself, with an embarrassment she could not conceal.

"That's better! Quite right, dear; but don't stay long," and the soft, lace-shaded hand released its clasp; but the eyes, faded with bitter tears, watched her till she had disappeared from view.

You can perhaps imagine, as well as I can describe, what were Jacqueline's feelings as she and her young aunt, followed by Bessie and Bert, went over the beautiful house and grounds.

It was by far the grandest place Jacqueline had ever seen, with devices for comfort which she had never even thought of, being unusually complete in every detail. The servants were all fixtures: Ginie being the colored cook, and her "ole man," Ike, the coachman; while their son Jim and daughter Jule acted as footman and upper housemaid. Then there was a gardener, who lived in his own cottage in the grounds, his wife acting as laundress; and over all a housekeeper, called Mrs. Rutter, who had been here since Jacqueline's mother was married.

By all these the new grand-daughter was welcomed with the greatest respect and affection, until she began to feel something like an ancestral princess in a fairy-tale; and perhaps might have been spoiled by such an unexpected turn of Fortune's wheel, had not her Christian faith been firm and abiding.

"God is very good," she thought, in her heart, "but I must remember that I am just the same foolish little Jacqueline as ever. He could strip me of all this just as easily as he has given it to me, and I must not let it make me silly and proud!"

So she kept her quiet, half-wistful, half-reserved manner, and they loved her the better for it.

"Bress her sweet eyes!" cried Ginie warmly, as she passed from her special domain. "You kain't 'member, Jule, but she's de bery make-up o' Miss Cely herse'f; sort o' sweet, an' still, an' keepin' herse'f to herse'f, like a reg'lar moss-rose, but 'thout a speck o' sass, or highfalutin', in her purty body. An' ef I ketch ye even a-hintin' 'at she ain't allers hed jest's good's the best, I'll ladle ye, I will!" and at this dark threat Ginie gave her great eyes an ominous roll, and returned to her muffins.

When the young people re-entered the library, Mrs. Leavenworth's glance leaped to meet them.

"Come, sit beside me, Celia," she said inadvertently; then, as the others exchanged glances, added,

"Ah! I forgot! I suspect I shall call you Celia oftener than any thing else dear, but you won't mind?"

"It makes me very happy," said Jacqueline simply, and the grandmother was pleased with her answer.

"Did you take her into my room, Arlene?" she then asked.

"No, mother; I thought you would prefer to do that, perhaps."

"You are right, my child. Will you all excuse us a few minutes?" and, taking Jacqueline's hand, she led her gently into the room adjoining.

It was large and richly fitted up, but Jacqueline saw nothing of it all, for she had no eyes except for a full-length portrait, from whose massive frame the very life-like girlish figure seemed just ready to step. Mrs. Leavenworth watched her, as with a faint cry, she stopped and looked at it intently, her face flushing and paling with deep feeling.

"It's mamma!" she whispered, "my own mamma! She was older and thinner, but just as sweet. Oh! I can see her so plainly now; it brings it all back!" and it seemed as if she could not bear to leave this fair representation of her lovely mother.

"Do you know, Jacqueline," said her grandmother, at length, "that you are a year and a half older than you have been supposed to be?"

"No, am I? How queer!"

"Yes. Bert was over three when you were born, and he is nearly eighteen, now."

"And I am almost fifteen, then — but I don't know my birthday," regretfully.

"I do, though, my poor darling!" laying a hand tenderly on the bright young head. "You will be fifteen the 20th of August. That will soon be here, now."

"Why, grandmother! it all seems so wonderful! Yesterday, I had only Miss Patty and her kindness; to-day, I have a grandmother, brother, aunt, home — and a birthday! I can't realize it."

"Well, dear, you shall realize the birthday, at any rate. The old Leavenworth place has been too long shut up to gloomy memories. On that day it shall be opened and adorned, and our friends invited to rejoice with us over our new-found child!"

"Do you mean," shrinking back a little, "a — a party, grandmother?"

"No, dear, not exactly. I should like better a sort of informal reception, extending through the afternoon and early evening, perhaps; but we will see."

"And, grandmother, how about Miss Patty?"

"Oh! she'll be here, of course."

"I know, but — I mean — think how she depends upon me; how helpless she is! would it" — speaking

low and timidly — "be quite right for me to leave her all alone?"

The elder lady looked down upon her tenderly. It seemed almost too great happiness to find her newly discovered grandchild possessed of a lovely nature, as well as face and form.

"My darling, you would not choose Miss Patty before your own relatives?"

"No, dear grandma, but she took me when I had no friends, and loved and trusted me. She has given me the kindest home, and learned to lean upon me greatly; how *could* I neglect her, and leave her alone?"

"You couldn't! It would be unkind and wrong. We will have to manage somehow; but one thing is certain, — this is your proper home, and I should be very loth to let you live elsewhere. Well, we won't worry over that to-day; let us go back to the others," and soon they were all seated about the table in the grand old dining-room, being waited upon by the silent-shod Jim and Jule, amid a blaze of lights, flowers, crystal, and china.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISIT TO OLD SCENES.

It seemed odd enough to go back to the plain little cottage, but there was no question of any thing else, that night; though bright and early in the morning Mr. Randall was again closeted with Miss Patty in earnest consultation.

Bert, meanwhile, had driven up in the T-cart, to take his sister for a drive, but had been obliged to tie the horse and wait awhile, as she insisted on first finishing her morning duties.

Fortunately these were not very heavy that day, so they were soon on the way to grandma's for a morning call, before taking their drive proper.

The sweet old lady greeted her grand-daughter tenderly, and Aunt Arl, as Bert insisted Jacqueline should also call her, was no less warm in her welcome; while Ginie bobbed a courtesy from the back garden, Jim pulled his forelock at the door, and Mrs. Rutter came from the dining-room to give her more dignified greeting. How delightful it all was! could she be the very same friendless. forlorn waif of a

year and a half ago? Was there a girl on earth who had such reason for thankfulness as herself?

And as, once more, they drove lightly away, her eyes shone with such brilliancy that Bert couldn't but notice it.

"You're very happy, sister Jaca?"

"Oh, Bert! 'happy' doesn't express it; it's too good to be true!"

"And if Miss Patty is obstinate, and won't come and live with us, you won't feel it's your duty to stay there?"

"Why, Bert, you don't mean — is *that* what they're talking about?"

"Yes. Grandma is going to ask her to give up the cottage, and come to us. She says we have always liked the dear old lady, and now she seems just like one of the family; and, grandma says, it does seem heartless to take you away, and leave her so alone there."

Jacqueline shook her head.

"She'll never come, Bert, never! Just think of her flowers, and all. No, I don't believe you could coax her away; it's been her home so long!"

"But we can make her so much more comfortable, Jaca."

"She won't think so. It's hard for the old to make changes, brother. I'm afraid she'll never consent."

"But you'll come, anyhow, sister?"

"I don't know. Not unless grandma insists. No, Bert, I feel that it's my plain duty to stay with her, however hard it may be. She took me when I had only one friend — good Mrs. Kenneth, what *will* she say when she hears of my wonderful good fortune? — and now, to selfishly leave hers for a finer home would be downright heartless! I don't believe God would bless such a move, Bert."

"Jaca, you're the best girl I ever saw, and I won't say another word; let the old folks settle that, we'll talk about other things," and soon he was retailing some of his school adventures for her benefit, delighted to hear her fresh, hearty laugh, and to see her shyness give place to the frank, loving manner of a real sister.

"Bless me," he thought, as he left her at the cottage-gate, and drove home again: "I don't see how boys can sneer at their sisters, as I've seen them do. I'd like to see anybody abuse mine!" and his eyes grew fierce at the very thought.

Jacqueline found Miss Patty alone, looking so pale and fluttered that the girl's heart ached for her; and, obeying her first impulse, she put an arm about her neck, and said, —

"What is it, dear aunty? May I call you aunty? Bert does."

"Why, I'd be delighted, child! Oh, it's nothing, dear, only I can't seem to settle on what ought to be done. Of course you must go to your grandma's, that's only right, and they want me to go too; but I don't know, I don't know! I love every bush and twig here, and it's like tearing me up by the roots, somehow; yet the thought of having anybody else to take your place makes me fairly *sick*, — there! I told you I was a selfish old coot, and I am!" and she burst into tears.

For the dear old lady was growing weaker and more childish with each month, as all could plainly see.

Jacqueline gently wiped her tears away with her own handkerchief, — for as usual, Miss Patty had mislaid hers, — making a strong, quiet resolve to herself as she did so, but she only said, —

"Don't worry, aunty, don't. If my happiness can only come by making you wretched I sha'n't care for it. Now, let's have a nice little meal on the porch. I can make the tea in a few minutes, and there's lots of cold chicken all ready," and soon they were cozily seated in just the old way, making Miss Patty feel almost as if nothing had happened.

When the dear lady was taking her after-dinner nap, however, Jacqueline took her hat, and started swiftly for Mr. Randall's, resolved upon a certain course. Bessie met her at the door with a gay —

"Good girl! I saw you coming. It's lovely to give us your first call."

"But this is for your father entirely!" she said, archly. "Is he in?"

"To be sure, Miss Scornful. And mayn't I even listen at the key-hole?"

"Yes, if you'll promise to take my part."

"I always do — always did, from the beginning. Here, papa, is our fairy princess, with the dreadful French name. Enter, faire Ladye Jacqueline — the Lord High Chamberlain awaits you!"

"What nonsense, Bessie! Well, my dear, you are welcome; and how is poor Miss Patty? Has she regained her equanimity, yet?"

"Partly, sir; and that's what I came to talk about. Mr. Randall, it is cruel to ask her to leave the cottage."

"I felt it was this morning, my child."

"And she can't live there alone."

"Certainly not."

"Dear sir, help me to do right. I feel I must stay with Miss Patty."

"There is much to say on the other side, Jacqueline. Your grandmother has mourned for years, and now feels almost as if her daughter were restored to her; she, too, needs you."

"But, Mr. Randall, she has Aunt Arlene, and Bert,

and all her loving household, and you and Bessie; Miss Patty has only me."

"You are right. But there is something to be said for yourself in this matter, Jacqueline. On one hand is a lonely life, toilsome too, to a certain extent; on the other, society, companionship, wealth. Have you considered all this?"

"Yes, sir."

"And still prefer Miss Patty?"

"Not exactly prefer, sir. I long to go to my very own home, but I could never enjoy it, thinking of poor Miss Patty, living there with somebody who might not half care for her. 'Twould make my food choke me, and I could not sleep in those beautiful rooms — it would poison every thing."

She turned her tearful eyes upon him, and he bowed his head gravely.

"Jacqueline, I think you are right. If Miss Patty will not go to your grandmother's, I believe we must make arrangements for you to remain there. After all, it is but five minutes' walk from one house to the other."

Then, holding out his hand, he clasped her own warmly.

"I perceive our little Jacqueline is as unselfish as she is brave and true. Nick told me of your encounter in the woods, my dear, and I thank you more

than I can express for the courage you displayed. I told your grandmother of it, this morning, and she said at once, 'If Jacqueline feels it is her duty to stay with Miss Patty, she shall stay. What you tell me makes me love her more than ever, but I shall not urge any selfish claims against her God-given instincts'; so, my child, I think for the present we may consider this question settled."

"Oh, thank you, sir! That takes a load off my mind. I shall have two homes now, instead of one. How rich I am! And now, Mr. Randall, might I see those things of my mother's?"

"Certainly, but they are at your grandmother's, now; would you like us to go over with you?"

"Indeed I should," said Jacqueline.

So the three started for the Leavenworth house. They met Lou Talbot with another girl, just outside the gate, who looked after them in an unpleasant way.

"How can Bessie Randall lower herself to be such friends with that poor-house girl; and Mr. Randall, too?" she said, indignantly.

"Poor-house! Did she come from the poor-house?"

"Yes, or an orphan asylum, or something; she's simply a nobody."

"Well," said the other, "that's just Bessie's way of showing that she can do exactly as she pleases, I

believe. She's a proud, stuck-up piece, and I can't endure her!"

"Oh, I don't feel that way," Lou hastened to reply, for she had many good qualities, and loyalty to her friends was one of them. "Bessie's not a bit proud, and is generally as sensible as she is good; but she seems perfectly infatuated now."

Fortunately, Jacqueline neither heard nor imagined these ill-natured speeches, so they hurt nobody but the speakers themselves, as is often the case.

It was with strange feelings of tenderness, even veneration, that Jacqueline, sitting close by her grandmother's side, received from her hands, and examined each article of her mother's. There was a gold pin and ring, the photographs of her loved ones at home, — those of Bert, as a baby, and Arlene, a chubby, bare-armed little lass, especially interested her; and, most precious of all, a well-worn Bible, its pages often blistered with tears, and passage after passage, especially those which comfort the weary-hearted, marked by her pencil. Both mother and child wept over them, but the elder lady's tears were not bitter now. God had heard her daughter's dying prayer, and sent this fair child back to her loving relatives, and the dreadful uncertainty of years was removed. Then, too, Mr. Randall was almost positive that he could now find and remove the dear

body, to rest at last with its own kin. The relief of it all seemed to make her almost young again, and she began to show renewed interest in all her affairs.

Jacqueline felt she must not stay long, as Miss Patty might need her, and, with a loving kiss, hurried away, leaving Mr. Randall to tell her grandmother of her final decision.

Mrs. Leavenworth listened quietly.

"It is well," she said, "I shall see her every day, and of course we will make her life there as easy and bright as possible; she is a dear, good girl!"

"As fine a girl as I ever saw!" returned Mr. Randall warmly.

"Much obliged, papa!" put in Bessie, in a whimsical whine.

Her father only laughed; but, after they had reached home again, he suddenly exclaimed, —

"So, Miss Jealousy, you don't like my admiration of Jacqueline Amory?"

"Why, papa! she's the dearest girl in the world, and I know it; but remember! your Bessie, like Napoleon, owns no rival."

"Very well, First-Consul, if that's the case, just hand me down that second volume of Macaulay, and — ahem!"

"Betake myself elsewhere? Oh, yes, I understand! Off I go, then, but I *don't* see how any sane

man can prefer a dead Macaulay to a living Bessie Randall!" and with her gayest laugh she was gone.

So it was finally arranged, to Miss Patty's wondering, but intense satisfaction, that Jacqueline was to stay with her for the present, at least; but not exactly as before.

A competent domestic was installed in the kitchen, and a larger room handsomely fitted up for Jacqueline. These things Mrs. Leavenworth insisted upon doing at her own expense for her much-loved grandchild.

But the young girl still gave Miss Patty much personal care, and, for the rest, spent her time most happily between the two houses, both of which she called home. Her grandmother, who was herself thoroughly educated, soon began the delightful task of directing her reading and studies; music and drawing-teachers were procured, and daily the girl practised upon the grand piano in the Leavenworth drawing-room, while her progress in art was unusually rapid.

Bert studied and read with her, and few brothers and sisters have ever been more congenial than they.

Jacqueline's connection with the Reform School was soon severed, when the facts in the case were made known; and she received kind letters of congratulation from all three of the ladies at F cottage,

as well as from the superintendent herself. Mrs. Kenneth was really exultant.

"I knew," she wrote, "that there was something unusual about my little waif, and I am more thankful than I can express that she has found such a home and friends."

Then she promised to come and spend her next vacation with them, if possible, as Jacqueline had begged her to do, when writing her.

Meanwhile, Nick was slowly failing, and about two weeks after Jacqueline's first visit to her grandmother, Mr. Randall came and asked her if she would like to make him another call.

"For," said that gentleman, "I do not think he can live many days, and he always asks eagerly after you, whenever I visit him."

So they went to the city together that very afternoon, Jacqueline taking a box of choice flowers, and some dainties of her own concocting.

They found the boy greatly changed for the worse, but his eyes brightened at sight of them, though he was almost too weak even to clasp their hands.

As Jacqueline bent over him, he whispered, —

"I'm sure He's heard me, Jack, — it's all right! I'm jest a-waitin', now," and unable to utter more, closed his eyes, and lay in perfect peace.

"He won't live through the night," said the attend-

ant, as they sadly left his bedside, "and he seems glad to go. He's been so patient, I've really grown attached to him, poor boy! I never can think of him as a criminal." And Jacqueline, thinking of the thief upon the cross, thanked God for his wonderful mercy to the children of men.

As they reached the street, she said hesitatingly, —

"Mr. Randall" —

"Yes, child."

"I've thought there's something I would like to do, if it wouldn't displease you."

"Well, what is it, my dear?"

"It is, to go to Gem Street once more; just for a little while, and if Ma'am is there" —

"She is. She has come home, but Mike has fled, nobody knows where; and she has had such a fright I shouldn't wonder if she tried to keep a more respectable house after this. At any rate, she makes great promises. Well, we'll go there, if you like; there's plenty of time before the early train," and hailing a car, they were soon leaving the cool, quiet part of the city for the narrow, shadeless streets, with frequent saloons and dilapidated tenements, which led to Jacqueline's old home.

They had to leave the car a block or two away, and as they turned a sudden corner, Jacqueline gave an exclamation of recognition; it was that very corner

near which she had been arrested on that May morning, over a year ago, and there, half a block away, was the same old tenement, down whose crumbling, paintless steps she had idly hopped, and waited till she caught sight of the boys, and ran to meet them.

Her heart thumped with excitement as they passed up the steps, and she kept close to Mr. Randall's side while he knocked loudly on the black, forbidding door.

It was opened a little way at length, and Ma'am herself appeared in the narrow aperture.

"Good-afternoon, Mrs. Grundy," said Mr. Randall politely. "I'm glad to find you at home. Here is a young lady who would like to see you."

The door opened wider, and Ma'am's sodden eyes fastened upon Jacqueline, who said quickly, —

"Don't you remember me, Ma'am?"

"Be you Jack?" she asked, in a surprised tone; "my, but you've growed!" and she led them, half-reluctantly, within, seating them on two hard chairs. Standing opposite, with her arms akimbo, she coolly proceeded with her scrutiny. "Well!" she added, "I never thought yer'd be like this; yer didn't han'some much, them days, Jack. Fine clo'es makes a heap o' diff'rence, don't they?"

"I think happiness makes more, Ma'am, and kind treatment, don't you?"

"Oh, likely," with indifference, "but yer was a spunky brat, an' needed takin' down now 'n' then. I wa'n't so bad to yer, Jack! Didn't never starve yer so long's I hed victuals myself, an' whippin's is good fur youngsters, 'specially sassy ones like you. I s'pose yer wouldn't car' to come back yer?" laughing hoarsely.

An involuntary shudder passed over the girl, as she shook her head.

"No. And I wish you could find a pleasanter home, Ma'am"—

"Don't want none!" gruffly, "I'm all right. Ole folks don't like to keep a changin' like young uns. I wouldn't hev nothin' in common with your kind o' folks; and yer better jest let me alone," with one of her old moody scowls.

"I don't want to trouble you, Ma'am; only I've known both lives, and it is *so* much better to live clean and honest and true. I think if you'd try it awhile, you'd never want to come back, either."

"Who says I ain't honest? Sassy as ever, I see. Now, yer needn't go to puttin' on airs with me, Jack Silsby! I know yer, and ye ain't no better'n other brats. Ef thet's all yer want, I've got other things to 'tend to."

Mr. Randall rose.

"Are you ready, Jacqueline? I think it is hardly worth while to prolong this interview."

"Yes, sir," and she followed him out, Ma'am grimly bringing up the rear; but as they reached the outer door, Jacqueline, yielding to some impulse, turned and held out her delicately gloved hand.

"Don't let us part like this, Ma'am; I didn't mean to offend you. You took care of me when I was left a forlorn little child, and I'm really grateful; won't you shake hands?"

Ma'am hesitated a minute, then put her hands behind her. "I've bin scrubbin', an' I ain't fit to tech yourn, but I ain't mad, and," evidently struggling against herself, "I'm glad ye're so well off, there!"

"Thank you. And if ever you need a friend, Ma'am, remember I'm one, will you?" her eyes shining with eagerness and sincerity, into the sullen orbs opposite.

"Oh, yes; 'tain't likely I'll forgit; good-by," and the door closed abruptly behind them.

But, after they had reached the sidewalk it was furtively opened a crack, and did not close again till that fateful corner was rounded. Then Ma'am went back to her work with a new look on her face, as she thought, —

"She's like a picter; an' she talked as ef she meant

it all. 'Clean an' honest an' true,' humph! It's aisy to be them, when you're rich, I'm thinkin'. 'Ef I ever want a friend,' eh? An' she looked at me as ef she *was* a friend; wish to gracious I hedn't thrashed her so when she was little. But she was aggrivatin' an' no mistake. 'Clean an' honest an' true;' oh dear! oh dear! I was them onct!" and Ma'am's apron went over her head, as she burst into an agony of tears.

CHAPTER XIII.

JACQUELINE'S BIRTHDAY.

The happy days passed swiftly; and, before she fairly realized it, Jacqueline's fifteenth birthday was at hand. Mrs. Leavenworth had made arrangements to carry out her original idea of a reception, only it was to be of the nature of a lawn *fête*, as well; and you may smile when I tell you that it seemed to Jacqueline, in anticipation, one of the most formidable events of her life.

She had learned by this time to be sufficiently easy in the society of her friends, but still shrank timidly from meeting strangers.

But she saw it pleased her grandmother to do this, so said nothing, and, after a little began to enter into the spirit of it, delighting in the task of trimming the house with flowers till it looked like a bower. Outside a handsome striped marquee was being set up on the velvety lawn.

Then, what girl could resist the thought of an entire and elaborate new costume? Certainly not our beauty-loving Jacqueline.

It was a fine white organdie, profusely trimmed

with lace, and a dainty little gypsy hat, adorned with marguerites, was to be worn with it; while long lace mitts drawn over the sheer sleeves, came nearly to the shoulders. Her only ornaments were deep red roses at neck and waist; and when she presented herself, thus dressed, before her grandmother, the latter stooped to kiss her, with secret gratification.

"Your dress is becoming, dear; I feel sure your behavior will correspond!" and Jacqueline felt she could sooner cut off a finger than commit an impropriety, after that.

Bert was more outspoken.

"You look like a court-beauty, Jaca; I declare, dress *does* make a difference."

"A little," said Arlene, "but if Jaca should do something ugly in that dress, you'd like her better in the old one."

"Oh, but she couldn't be ugly, Aunt Arl, if she tried; but what have you done with Miss Patty, Jaca?"

"She's just gone out to the marquee with grandma. Wait, Bert, your necktie's just a bit crooked; there, that's better. How fine you look, brother!"

"Much obliged; but I wanted to wear my tennis rig; think I might, too; but grandma thought it wasn't just the thing, considering I'm host, and all

that. Say, Jaca, did you ever wear a ring in your life?"

"No, never."

"All right, then. Here's from your brother, with best birthday wishes," and, opening a tiny box which he had held concealed in one hand, he slipped upon her finger a pretty, girlish circlet set with pearls.

"Oh, how beautiful! How good you all are to me. Do you know, Aunt Patty gave me the prettiest little work-basket all fitted up; and this elegant dress from grandma; and that lovely set of Dickens from Aunt Arlene" —

"And this, with the compliments of your friends, Mr. Randall and Bessie," broke in a gay voice at her elbow, and turning, she received into her hand, outstretched in welcome, a magnificent copy of Milton's "Paradise Regained."

"I thought it was appropriate to the occasion; you would understand how one feels to come back to Eden," said the irrepressible girl.

"Bessie," said her father, half-reproachfully, "is all life a jest to you?"

"I don't know, papa. I believe I *am* a good deal like the Frenchman, who said it was 'one fast choke' meaning 'vast joke' of course, — when he was going to be hanged. Why don't you come out-doors? We saw your grandma and Aunt Patty gossiping con-

tentedly enough under the tent-fly. Where are you going to receive?"

"There, I believe — aren't we, Bert?"

"Well then, you must hurry, for some carriages have just driven up. Here, Jule, take my wraps, please; do you like my dress, Bert? I knew you would. Come on, all," and she tripped out, each obediently following, for nobody could resist the gay, frank, fun-loving girl, whose heart was in the right place, if her tongue did sometimes wag too carelessly.

The weather was kind that day, and it was a luxury to breathe the balmy air, and step about on the thick turf, among the flowering shrubs, which were not more gay than the groups of human blossoms scattered here and there. All the town had turned out to honor Mrs. Leavenworth and her grandchild; while many had come also from the city, glad to see once more their old friend, and visit the once hospitable, but so long-closed mansion, where she had often entertained them in by-gone days, with rare refinement and cordiality.

Some of Jacqueline's story had also crept out; enough to make every body curious to meet her; and it is safe to say many were a good deal astonished to find, instead of the awkward, ill-bred child they had expected, a charming girl, who, though she talked little, said that little well, and who was not so greatly

elated by her sudden change of fortune as to appear at all disagreeable.

But how was it with Jacqueline at heart?

It would have been almost impossible that she should not be somewhat affected by all this. There is, perhaps, nothing so fatal to Christian growth as too great earthly prosperity. The soul grows callous and cold; selfishness creeps in, and heaven's remoter glories pale before the present light of enjoyment. Then, too, as Spurgeon aptly says, "It takes a great deal of grace to be able to bear praise," and Jacqueline had won considerable of that lately, withal.

But she honestly tried to keep herself humble, and remember that she was the very same, with only her outward circumstances changed.

Thus, being a resolute little Jaca, and strong in her determination to honor the good God who had done so much for her, she was, perhaps, as little affected by all this as one of her age and temperament could be.

As it grew darker the house and grounds were illuminated, and looked almost like a fairy scene. The lamps suspended from trees and shrubs were of many colors, while a row of Japanese globe-lanterns arched the entrance to the carriage-drive, under which groups were constantly coming and going. Jacqueline started for the house through the rear part of the grounds, to carry a message from her

grandmother to Mrs. Rutter. She stopped and looked about her a moment, a flood of proud delight filling her heart.

"It's *my* home!" she thought; "I could come here and live all the time, if it weren't for Miss Patty!" and, for the minute, a selfish, unworthy wish crossed her mind.

Then she heard a rustle in the shrubbery at the other side of the large tree by which she was standing, and a voice said, —

"Well, it's a grand old place! I wonder if that girl knows enough to appreciate her luck."

"I don't know; they say she's going to stay on with that queer old maid she's been living with — odd too; it can't be her own choice."

"Probably not. The old lady is as proud as fury, you know, and no doubt is glad enough to leave her there till she has had a chance to give her a few lessons in etiquette."

"Not but that she appears well enough, while she keeps still — really pretty, indeed; but she probably is as ignorant and ill-bred as possible. Have you heard her say any thing?"

"Yes, a little."

"Did she murder the Queen's English?"

"Why, no, I can't say that she did; but 'twas only a sentence, or two."

"Oh, you mark me! she'll put them to the blush often enough!" and they passed on out of hearing.

Jacqueline stood still, and her face grew scarlet, then white. There is nothing so hard to weak human nature as to make some great sacrifice, and have it either utterly ignored, or imputed to some other cause than our own good will; and Jacqueline was not yet old enough to hear such misapprehension with calmness. Then, too, all her pride was stung to the quick by the cruel slurs upon her breeding, which, she felt, had not been deserved by any thing in her manners this afternoon and evening.

The words had been like a dash of cold water over her glowing joy and pride of a moment before, and her worst passions were instantly aroused. She clinched her fists in the old way, and shook them passionately after the retreating figures.

"You hateful liars!" she exclaimed, in a deep voice, vibrating with anger; "oh, you liars!" and the force of her feelings choked her. Then, turning, she ran wildly along the path, and into the house through a back door, and so on, up the back stairway to the little room which had just been fitted up for Bert and herself, as a studio. It was almost the only room unlighted, except those of the domestics; and, throwing herself face down upon a small divan across one corner, she burst into a flood of tears.

"Oh! oh!" she thought, "what's the use? I've tried so hard to be true, and good, and like a lady; and that's the way they talk about me! As if grandma, and all, were ashamed of me; and perhaps they are — how do I know? Oh, I won't stand it! I'm an Amory, as well as Bert, whatever they say, and I'll come here and live to-morrow. I'll show them, — hateful things! Oh, it's too, too mean!" and the sobs came with uncontrollable force.

She was so wrapped up in her emotions that she did not hear the door open, nor suspect the surprised figure which stood motionless a moment, watching her own, so clearly outlined by her white dress in the moonlighted room; nor was she at all conscious of Arlene's presence, until the latter knelt beside her, and, laying a hand on her arm, said gently, —

"Jacqueline! What is it, darling? what has happened?"

A fresh burst of sobs was the only answer.

"My dear child, don't cry so! There, there! Why, Jaca, what *can* it be? Do try and control yourself, before mother asks for you — it would break her heart to see you like this."

The reference to her grandmother brought another outburst, but it was a clearing-up shower, and, after a little, the tears flowed more quietly, and she could answer brokenly, —

"I overheard something that — hurt my feelings," (more sobs) "and — and" —

"Who said it, dear? Any of our household?"

"Oh, no, no!"

"Mr. Randall? Bessie?"

"No — no — they wouldn't."

"Was it anybody you care much ıor?"

"'Twasn't anybody I know — at all."

"Well, foolish child, then why should you care? Would you be willing to tell me what they said?"

"They said I — I stayed with Miss Patty because — grandma was — ashamed to have me here!" (Another shower.)

"But, Jaca, you know that isn't true!"

"Yes — but" —

"And yet you let it wound you like this! Jacqueline, dear, *why* did you stay with Miss Patty? Was it to please yourself, the world, or your heavenly Father?"

"It was — the last, I hope."

"Well, then, doesn't He understand you thoroughly, even if the world doesn't?"

"Yes — of course."

"Then why will you let any thing careless outsiders say, hurt you, when you know you have His approval? My dear, forgive me if I say this looks a little, just

a little — as if you had also wanted human praise, doesn't it, Jaca?"

"I don't know, but it's hard to do right when you don't want to, and then be talked about — so!"

Arlene laughed a little, but so tenderly that her niece could not feel hurt; at the same time she drew the brown head to her breast, and wiped away the bitter tears with her own delicate handkerchief. Then she said, —

"Yes, dear, it *is* hard, but if we can truly say 'My heart is stayed on Thee,' all these things lose their force. Those who please Christ are very apt to displease the world, and I want my little niece to grow so strong in her Christian service that she shall not mind any thing the world may say, if she is certain she is doing God's will. Now, put this all aside, dear; keep right on in the straight course as you have begun, and don't let it rankle for a moment; will you try?"

"Yes."

"That's right. Come, I'll smuggle you into my room to wash your face, while I run down and see to things. Didn't mother send some message to Mrs. Rutter?"

"Oh, I forgot! It was to send two more refreshment-tables out to the marquee."

"Very well, — I'll see to it. Come, dear," and

kissing her tenderly, Arlene led her down the hall to her own room, when with a parting "Remember! Christ must be all in all," she left her, to hurry down to other duties.

Jacqueline's first act, when left alone, was to go down upon her knees and humbly ask pardon for her pride and anger; her next, to make herself presentable again. After which she sought out Miss Patty, and by the most watchful attentions and loving care, sought to make amends before all for her momentary ill-feeling against her; resolutely staying beside her in the warm, lighted rooms, quite removed from the open windows, as Miss Patty's rheumatism compelled her to keep out of all draughts, and shutting her eyes to the beauty and gayety without.

Soon, however, the guests all departed, except the intimate family friends. Mrs. Leavenworth was animatedly talking it over with Mr. Randall in the deep side portico, from whence they could give directions about the removing of the lanterns.

She seemed years younger to her companion, as, erect and dignified, she had bidden her guests adieu, with some cheery or witty remark for each, and he felt inexpressibly thankful that his efforts at reclaiming her grandchild had been so productive of good. He expressed something of this, as they re-entered the house, just as Jacqueline stepped into the cloak-

room off the side hall, to get Miss Patty's wraps, where she was concealed by the half-shut door.

"Yes," she heard her grandmother say, as they passed by, "I should have welcomed her warmly for Celia's sake, even if she had been ignorant and uncouth; but to find her possessed of the best Christian qualities of her mother, added to a refined, modest manner, makes me so happy I feel as if I were young again! Ah! Richard, hope is the only fountain of youth, after all, — and I hope great things for my grandchildren."

So Jacqueline's heart was comforted.

CHAPTER XIV.

TAKING A STAND.

THE very next day came the news of Nick's death, and, a day or two later, the three young people, in Mr. Randall's care, went to the city to attend his funeral, carrying many beautiful flowers to lay upon his coffin. In spite of their expectations he had lived several days after Jacqueline's visit, though they were mostly spent in a stupor that was much like death; but at the last he had roused up for a moment, given one bright, upward look with wide-opened eyes, and exclaiming, "Oh, how purty!" had dropped back, quite gone. What he had seen, or imagined in that one glance, who can say? But Jacqueline hoped it was a glimpse of a brighter future than the poor, neglected boy had ever even dreamed of.

Through Mrs. Leavenworth's generosity he was buried in a small purchased lot, with fitting ceremonies, and Jacqueline wept with real grief over his grave.

Ma'am was there, too, in a very decent suit of mourning, and her face wore a softer look than usual.

As they turned away from the grave, she stepped up to Jacqueline, and held out her gloved hand.

"Will ye shake to-day, Jack?" she asked, looking keenly into the girl's tearful eyes.

Jacqueline readily gave her hand. Ma'am held it irresolutely a moment, then spoke quickly, as if afraid to delay.

"Jack, I want to tell yer, I'm a-goin' away from 'ere, 'way out West; an' I'm a-goin' to try an' be wot yer said."

"What *I* said, Ma'am?"

"Yes; 'clean, an' honest, an' true,' ye know. I'm a-goin' to try it, onyhow!"

"Oh, Ma'am, how glad I am! Mr. Randall, can't I ride back in the hack with Ma'am?"

"Certainly. We will wait for you at the station."

Jacqueline was soon seated beside the woman who had once been her only protector, and listening eagerly as she told how Mr. Randall had given her such a kind letter from Mrs. Leavenworth, the other day, containing a check for three hundred dollars, and asking her to take it and begin a new and better life.

Ma'am's usually fierce eyes were actually softened by tears, as she told how she meant to do this, and was going to take all her savings and start a small farm.

"But who will go with you?" asked Jacqueline.

The woman hesitated a moment, —

"One kin allers git comp'ny; an' I knows young men wot's tired o' wrong ways, an' would like a chance at suthin' better. Now, ef Mike should ever come back" — she stopped, and gave Jacqueline a sly glance.

"Oh, if he only would give up that dreadful life, and go on a farm, how glad I'd be!"

"Yes, but ye see, he can't, 'cause they'd nab 'im right up fur thet bu'glary, ef they knew; but mebbe sometime, who knows?"

They parted kindly, never to meet again; and, as Jacqueline was carried swiftly homewards on the railway-train, she felt that now she had indeed left her old life behind her, and could look forward with hope to the glad future.

There was only a week or two more before school should begin, and she was resolved that her relatives should have no cause to blush for her there.

It was Mr. Randall's opinion that Bert might as well remain at home, and attend the public school this year; for the management was much better than it had been, and masters could be procured from the city for the art studies he had always been so interested in. Then brother and sister could study these together, and would learn all the faster for their companionship.

Bert, therefore, entered upon his last year, while Jacqueline was still low down in the grammar-school. But the persistence with which she read and studied proved that she would make rapid strides forward.

Bessie was also to go this winter, being in the class just below Bert, and she was to join them in their studies at home, as well.

So the studio was fitted with three easels, a large table, and models and studies in profusion, and here the hours from eight to ten, daily, were spent most delightfully, after which they attended school through the remainder of its session. Their music-lessons were, of course, received separately, Bessie practising at home, and Bert and Jacqueline on the Leavenworth piano. A boy was hired to assist in the greenhouse, and Hannah, the domestic, kept the cottage in nice order; so that Jacqueline had little to do, except attend to her studies, and keep up the little personal offices for Miss Patty which showed her love and care.

Saturdays were always delightful days, and generally spent together among the three houses, or in riding or walking in the pleasant autumn weather. Jacqueline had felt very humble for a good while after her outburst on her birthday night, and at first thought she had no right to call herself a Christian, but a talk with Arlene showed her how wrong was

this feeling, and she had now about decided to unite with the church the first Sunday in October.

But she longed intensely that Bert should unite with her, and that, at present, seemed quite foreign to his mind. Bert was a boy of the best principles, with a reverent regard for all holy things, but he was full of fun and frolic, and had an idea he must change his whole demeanor should he unite himself with the church.

Their pastor had been a grave, austere man, with whom the youth of his flock could find little in common, but failing health had made it necessary for him to resign his charge, and he was replaced by a man of entirely different characteristics. Mr. Case was apparently the cheeriest, most light-hearted of men, with a quick, joyous step, a sympathetic voice, and a smiling, even merry face, while the grasp of his hand was cordiality itself.

He seemed determined to become thoroughly acquainted with each one of his parishioners, and was especially pleasant to the young men. There was an organization of the Y. M. C. A. in town, but it had been so neglected for lack of interest and funds, that the rooms were about to be given up.

This decision Mr. Case begged them to reconsider, and asked the members of the Sunday-school to come forward and do something to revive an interest in

this good work. The man's manner was magnetic, and when he called upon all who would help to raise their hands, there was not one which did not fly up into the air, with comical readiness.

Mr. Case was wise. He knew that where the children are interested, the parents soon come to be, and with two hundred children talking and planning, a goodly number of older people would soon begin to talk and plan also, to some purpose. So a meeting was called at Lou Talbot's house, — for there wasn't a more enthusiastic girl in town than Lou, when there was any thing of this kind to be done, — and all our young people were there.

It was rather funny to see how completely Lou ignored all past opinions in regard to Jacqueline, and now treated her with the warmth of sincere friendship! But as Jacqueline had never thoroughly understood her past feelings, so she now did not entirely welcome her present ones, and treated her much the same as she had always done, politely, but with a certain quiet reserve that all of Lou's airy friendliness could not quite sweep away. It vexed the latter that it was so; she liked prestige so well she would have been very glad to be the intimate friend of the Leavenworth family, free to come and go as she chose; but Jacqueline's instinct in these things was unusually true, and, without even knowing of the many

ill-natured speeches Lou had made about her, she felt that she could never care for her as she did for Fannie Gilbert and other girls, who came next to the supreme place Bessie held in her heart.

The large parlors were filled to-night, and there was a Babel of voices, in which the words "fair," "bazaar," "social," "entertainment," "supper," etc., were often heard. Mr. Case took the chair, and, rapping the meeting to order, called upon several of the older ones present, to give their opinions as to the best method of raising money to pay the rent of the Young Men's Christian Association rooms for another year, as well as to make them more attractive than at present, and revive interest in this work.

Arlene, with her betrothed, George Harper, was present, and the young man's intelligent face so attracted the minister's attention that he asked him if he had any suggestions to make. Though taken by surprise, George at once rose, and, first stating that not being a resident now, he really had no right to interfere, began to tell of certain methods which they were using, with good effect, in the city.

George was well known to many, and he was given a hearty round of applause as he took his seat, which brought blushes to Arlene's face, as well as his own.

Then others followed, and among the many opin-

ions and plans, a few were finally decided upon, which, as we may see, were carried out later on.

As our special young friends left the house, they found Mr. Case in their group, and in pairing off, Bert stepped forward with Bessie, while Jacqueline fell to his share. After talking over the evening's plans a little, Mr. Case asked, suddenly, —

"Miss Jacqueline, you are not a member of the church?"

"No, sir, not yet."

"But you would like to be?"

"Yes, sir. I had thought of joining next communion, but I am not decided, because" —

"Yes — because?"

She lowered her voice.

"I am so anxious to have my brother join with me!"

"And isn't he willing?"

"No, sir, not exactly. I've thought, perhaps if you could talk to him; but he won't let me even suggest such a thing."

Mr. Case smiled.

"I don't think he need fear me! I mean to have many a talk with him, as well as all my young people, and I hope the time will come when not one of them will dread to see me! Well, good-night, Miss Jacqueline; I have to go down this street to call on Mr.

Phelps, who is worse to-night, but I shall see you again, soon," and, lifting his hat courteously, he left her with her friends.

But the very next day (it was Saturday) as Bert sat fishing off a pier of the bridge at the foot of the Leavenworth grounds, in a meditative mood, he heard a hearty voice bidding him "Good-day," and looking up, saw Mr. Case approaching. In a matter-of-course way he seated himself beside the boy, and asked, with interest, —

"What have you caught?"

"Nothing but a 'shiner' or two, yet, but sometimes there's a run of perch through here, and I thought I'd try my luck to-day."

"It's a sport I was very fond of as a boy," and Mr. Case went on, in a joyous tone, giving a few reminiscences of his boyhood that at once secured Bert's attention and interest; and before the boy realized it, he was talking with his minister as freely as if the latter had been a boy himself.

It did not take long to bring the conversation around to this new charge and its duties, about which Mr. Case talked freely, taking it for granted that Bert should feel as interested as himself, and be ready to give him his support and countenance.

"A minister can do little without the help of the young men of his church," he said, casually, "espe-

cially in our church, here, where the older members are dropping out so fast, with nobody to take their places. If one has means and influence, so much the more necessary that he should consecrate himself, and all he has, to God's service. You are not a member yet, Bert?"

"No, sir."

"That is strange. Brought up in the church as you have been, and always on the side of right and truth — why is it?"

Bert moved uneasily.

"I hardly know. I've no desire to be a bad boy; yet, somehow, I hate to give up my freedom, too."

"In other words you still prefer service under the devil to that under Christ?"

Bert started at the strong words, though they were softened a little by the man's genial smile.

"Oh! no, sir — only" —

"Only you can't explain it in any other way, my boy, if you come down to the gist of the matter. Free we can never be in this world, for there is something within we must obey: the good and the evil are ever struggling for the mastery — the good is of God, the evil of Satan, we believe; now, the only question is, 'Which shall I serve?'"

Bert went home very quiet and thoughtful. He felt the justice of these words, and they touched him

closely. He meant to be on the right side, always. He had no wish for low, debasing pleasures; why should he hesitate, then, to come out on the Lord's side? It was an afternoon of thought and prayer to Bert, mostly spent in his own room, and when, after supper, he entered Miss Patty's parlor, and Jacqueline, sitting alone, reading under the lamp, looked up to greet him, she knew by his face that he had something to tell her.

"Bert?" she said, rising quickly and coming forward, her face one intensified question.

He stooped and kissed her tenderly.

"Jaca, I have made my decision; I'll be on the Lord's side; we'll join the church together!" and Jacqueline felt that her happiness was complete.

The next Sunday but one — being the first in October — was a soft dreamy day, with a lilac haze nearly obliterating the distant mountains; and all three of our friendly families were on their way early to church. Miss Patty and Jacqueline sat in the long Leavenworth pew, and George Harper was also present, in addition to the rest of the family, just filling it comfortably.

Many eyes were turned upon Mrs. Leavenworth, who had not been out for so many years, and those who knew her best were glad to see that her mourning was lightened by more white than usual.

She attracted even more attention than the youthful pair who, it was now known, were soon to be married; and the other pair, still younger, who were today, to take their places in Christ's ranks.

Mr. Case preached a sermon that was long remembered, — a sermon on practical Christianity, with these words for his text, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;" and his clear, strong words, setting forth our duty so plainly, seemed to brace his congregation for truer work, as a fresh autumn breeze braces us after the languor of summer.

It was exactly what Bert needed, and he listened to every word with an attention that could not be distracted. Then came the simple ceremony by which these two, with a few others, took upon themselves the solemn vows of their church, and gave themselves wholly to a life of Christian duty; followed by the holy communion, and the quiet walk homewards.

Miss Patty and Jacqueline always dined at the Leavenworth house on Sundays, and to-day, George being also present, it was a very happy meal.

Jacqueline liked George thoroughly, and could see that he had an excellent influence over Bert; for he was not only a warm, true-hearted Christian, but a wide-awake, active, progressive young man, for whom every one had great respect. So, when, after dinner,

as the younger people strolled into the garden, he came and walked by her side, she greeted him with a bright smile, though wondering a little that he should have left Arlene even for a moment.

"And now, Jacqueline," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, "what is to be your branch of the service?"

"My branch of"—looking up surprisedly. "I don't understand."

He smiled.

"When people enter the service of a king they generally have special plans and duties; haven't you any?"

Jacqueline understood now, —

"I don't know," she said with hesitation. "Of course I must do my best to learn, and be careful of grandma and Aunt Patty, and attentive at church and Sunday-school."

"And is that all?"

"Why, what else could I do?"

"Something, I think. You know, Jacqueline, I have heard your whole story, and I can't help feeling you have been through such special training for some special purpose."

Jacqueline looked astonished, but her eyes kindled too. This was a new and wonderful thought. Might it indeed be that she could make of her hateful past a stepping-stone to God's higher work? Had it been,

in some sort, a training-school for some future post which He had reserved for her ?

It was a thought that almost took her breath away, but filled her with a strange, new joy as well. She looked eagerly in his face, and he continued, —

"Jacqueline, it is very seldom that one has known such extremes of life as you, especially while still young enough to have a future. You have known intimately the feelings, wants, and temptations of the lowest, poorest class, and now are learning how these same feelings affect the wealthy and well-born.

"You don't know, as I do, how impossible it has always seemed to bring rich and poor together, in any sort of sympathy, for each distrusts the other; and one is apt to give daintily, at arm's-length, while the other clutches greedily, without gratitude or appreciation. Perhaps you, with your experience, could be a link between the two. It would be a grand work!"

Jacqueline listened with kindling eyes, and he continued, —

"You are still a mere girl, and have your time pretty thoroughly occupied; but there is plenty of work around you, even in this town. To begin with, there is this Y. M. C. A.; why shouldn't it include and help to save the poorer young men here, as well

as those of the upper classes, who are now its only members?"

"But what can *I* do?"

Jacqueline's voice was almost a whisper.

"You and Bert could do a good deal together, and he will always follow you. Besides, one has but to long for opportunities and they always come. You have never read George MacDonald, or Emerson? The former says, 'We must *be* before we can *do;* one can not act until he is in a right condition for action;' and the latter, '*Be* and not *seem,* for pretension may sit still, but can not act.' Be ready, then, Jacqueline, be charitable, in the full sense of the word, as given in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians; be alert and true, and God will use you when he wishes, for you will be fitted to his use."

He bowed slightly, and passing on, joined Arlene and Bert, who were discussing the grapes on a particular vine; but Jacqueline had received the seed into good ground, and her heart was filled with an eager desire to place herself in the hands of her Creator, to be, or do, whatever he might desire.

CHAPTER XV.

THE Y. M. C. A. ENTERTAINMENT.

"JACQUELINE! Jaca! Are you ready?" came Bert's call up the cottage stair-case.

"In a minute. Is Bessie there?"

"Yes. Grandma sent the carriage, and says to wrap up warm, it's so chilly to-night. Oh, how lovely you look!" as Jacqueline appeared, tripping lightly down the stair-way in her pretty evening dress.

"Are you all right, Aunt Patty?" she asked, as her bright face peeped through the parlor door. Then entering, she drew the light stand a trifle closer to the good lady's elbow, and pushing a stool under her feet, stooped to kiss her affectionately. "You won't be lonely, aunty?"

"No indeed, dear. Hannah will come in here and sit, when she's through with her work. Good-night; I hope you'll have a delightful time, and make lots of money," and Jacqueline was off.

It was the night of the Y. M. C. A. entertainment, and for a fortnight all the young people had been busy preparing for it. The large town hall had been turned into a bower by means of flags, bunting, ever-

greens, and flowers, while a tempting literary and musical program had been prepared, as well as an art display, in which our friends were all much interested. Jacqueline had been chosen to attend here and explain the various articles loaned for the occasion, while Charlie Talbot, in artist's costume, was to sit and pretend to paint at one of the easels.

The regular rostrum, a large one, had been inclosed by curtains, and hung with crimson, to form this art-gallery, — a temporary platform being built out in front for the other part of the performance, — and was elaborately fitted up, mostly from the long-gathered stores of the Leavenworth and Randall houses. The floor had been first covered with dark-colored canvas, upon which costly rugs and furs were laid, a part of the two sides being filled in by a low, wide divan, richly covered.

Upon the crimson-draped walls, and several easels, were arranged pictures, bannerets, and drapings, of all grades of excellence, every one, however, being the work of home talent. These were in pencil, crayon, sepia, india-ink, water-colors, oils and pastels, — on satin, ivorine, plush, bolting-cloth, crash, wood, paper, and canvas ; while a cabinet or two of mineral specimens, one of china and Japanese ware, a small case of rich laces, and another of rare fans, were placed among a dazzling profusion of embroideries and fancy

needle-work of every description, making a really artistic and elegant collection; not a specimen from out of town being admitted.

To this "Museum of Fine Arts," as Bert loved to call it, our special friends had contributed many specimens of work, and, with the help of three or four others, had arranged and managed it entirely.

Lou had been active in helping, too, for she was very deft in all kinds of fancy-work, having excellent taste, and any amount of energy. She had, indeed, privately expected to be placed in charge of it, and felt more chagrined than she would have cared to show when, by a vote of the "Aid Society," Jacqueline was given the position.

This choice was just, for several reasons: Jacqueline could not yet help in either the recitations or music, so would have been quite left out if not given this post; while Lou was to sing a solo, and in a quartette, and play several accompaniments; besides, Jacqueline's and Bert's work formed the largest part of the display, and the fittings of the rostrum were nearly all their contribution. Bessie, being a first-rate elocutionist, was to be kept busy; while Bert's fine tenor voice was in demand for nearly every song.

As Jacqueline, after removing her wraps in the cloak-room, entered the improvised studio, she gave it a comprehensive, delighted glance.

"How beautiful it is in this mellow light," she thought, and placed the wide, flat basket of flowers she had brought, where it would be most effective, little imagining that her own fair presence really lent the room its finishing grace. Then she peeped between the curtains, and was delighted to see that, though the hall already seemed comfortably full, the people were still coming in, with no abatement of the steady stream. Charlie's voice interrupted her, and she turned pleasantly to greet him.

He was a handsome, dark-eyed youth, with a more genial manner than his sister's, and a great favorite with all.

"A good house, isn't it?" he asked gayly, seating himself on the edge of the divan, "I suppose you and I won't have any thing to do until the intermission, will we?"

"No," said Jacqueline, "not even then; but they'll probably pour in when the exercises are over."

She was looping back a bit of drapery as she spoke, and he sat idly watching her, as she gave deft little touches here and there, thinking how well her white wool dress, with its statuesque folds, looked against the crimson background, when the cloak-room beyond was suddenly filled by a bevy of performers, who had just arrived, and soon began overflowing into the

studio, bustling about in such a way as to threaten the frail works of art with utter destruction.

"Now this will never do!" cried Charlie, in his good-natured way. "We won't be fit for visitors if you don't keep out. Come, vamose! skedaddle! shoo—o!" and he drove them merrily back into the cloak-room and the passage-way which led to the improvised rostrum, Jacqueline, meanwhile, looking on and laughing with amusement.

They went good-naturedly enough, with the exception of Lou, who was altogether in an ill-humor. Something about her dress had gone wrong, while she had taken just enough cold to make her usually fine voice rough and husky for singing.

So she said crossly, —

"Be still, Charlie! How ridiculous you are to put on such airs, as if this studio belonged to you and Jacqueline, when every body knows you were both put here, only because you couldn't do any thing else!"

"For shame, Lou!" cried Charlie, giving a quick glance towards Jacqueline, who had flushed hotly at the cruel taunt — especially cruel in her case, because so thoroughly true, and so acutely felt; for Jacqueline was still far behind her mates in all studies and every accomplishment, except drawing, which seemed almost second nature to her. "You know

perfectly well you'd give your eyes to have this place yourself, and that's what makes you so hateful about it! Jacqueline, I wouldn't mind a word she says."

But Jacqueline did mind, and looked after Lou's scornful, retreating figure as if she were about to spring forward, and answer her in kind; then she checked herself, and the flush slowly died away. She had remembered George Harper's words just in time; she must *be* before she could *do*.

"And if I'm not able to control myself, how can I expect to help others?" asked her instinctive good sense.

She turned to Charlie, —

"Is it true that Lou would have liked to be in here?"

"Oh, of course," he said carelessly; "Lou always wants the best place, but I didn't think she'd show it so plainly — hark! they're beginning; that's Fannie Gilbert's and Gene Graham's piano and flute duet; they play well, don't they?" and as Jacqueline seemed listening quietly, he hoped she had forgotten.

But she had not. She was only thinking deeply. By and by she said, —

"Charlie, it seems foolish to waste all the evening in here, doesn't it? I've a great mind to put on my things and go out into the audience."

"And leave me alone?" asked Charlie dubiously.

She laughed.

"There's only a plank between you and civilization!" tapping the cloak-room door as she disappeared behind it.

The audience-room was so crowded that she had to go far down the hall before she could find a seat, which was then only a camp-stool in the aisle, with nobody about her that she knew. Just behind her, on the ledge of a window, were two young men, older than Bert, and of much rougher appearance. They were commenting freely upon the entertainment, and as Lou and three other young people smilingly retired after singing an encore, one remarked, —

"Yes, it's lots o' fun fur them big-bugs; they always like to show off; but why don't they own up that it *is* fun, and nothin' else, 'stid of always purtending they're tryin' to help somebody?"

"Well, they are," said another, "the Y. M. C. A.'s."

"Bosh!" returned the former, "what's the good o' them dudes, anyhow? There 'tis again! They purtend they're helping somebody, too, and so it goes; and all they do is to hold meetings, and fix up their rooms for their own folks to go to."

"They invite every body; you and me as well's the rest, Sam."

"Yes, but they don't want us, with our old clo'es, and rough ways. Don't I know? I tell you, I went

once, and the fine fellers that was readin' and playin' chess looked at me as much as to say, 'What you want here?' and I was glad to sneak out like a licked cur. No, thank you; gimme Dobbs's every time."

Jacqueline knew what "Dobbs's" was — a low groggery, much frequented by factory people, and of a decidedly disreputable character.

Here, then, was a case where the rich and poor failed to understand each other; the former honestly trying to serve the latter, whose sensitive pride winced under the very effort. Such ought not to be the case, if this effort were rightly carried out. Jacqueline almost forgot Lou's taunt as she began to puzzle over this question, still asking, "What can *I* do?" until she felt a touch on her shoulder. It was Bert, who exclaimed, half impatiently, "Why, Jaca, what *are* you doing here? We've been looking high and low. The exercises are most over, and they'll be pouring into your art-room before you know it. Charlie's about distracted!"

Jacqueline sprang up quickly.

"I'll come at once; wait, Bert!" as he began to elbow a way through the crowded aisle; then, while he looked on wonderingly, she stepped to the window-ledge, and, with a modest blush, said pleasantly, —

"We are going to exhibit our art-studio now; won't

you come and see it? I think there are some things you would enjoy, even if they are by home talent."

Only a modest little invitation, such as any pretty girl might give to a couple of young gentlemen, but it acted like magic upon them.

Instantly their swaggering manner was exchanged for polite attention, as they straightened up and bowed; and one said heartily, "Thank you, ma'am," while the other added, "With much pleasure."

"She's that girl to Leavenworths'," whispered our first speaker, as Jacqueline disappeared with her brother. "Ain't she a beauty?"

"Yes, and better'n all, she's good, too," added the other heartily. "Come, let's go look at this art business"—and for a time "Dobbs's" attractions were forgotten.

Meanwhile, Jacqueline followed Bert into the cloak-room, where, hastily throwing aside her wraps, she went up to Lou, who sat talking with Mr. Kline, the music-master and manager of that part of the entertainment.

"Lou," she said pleasantly, "I'm afraid we're going to have such a crowd I can't attend to them all; would you be kind enough to help me? There'll be so many asking questions, all at once."

Lou looked up quickly.

"You don't want *me*," she said brusquely, "Bessie's somewhere about."

"But I asked *you*, Lou — it would be a great accommodation," and Jacqueline's smile was too frank and sweet to harbor any malice.

Lou rose.

"Are you in earnest?" she asked, in a lower voice, looking keenly at Jacqueline.

"Certainly! Come," and she hurried her to her place.

When the curtain rose, Lou was conspicuous near the front, while Jacqueline stood quite in the background, and Bert, seeing it, felt quite indignant.

"That pushing girl!" he thought angrily, "she's too much for Jacqueline!" but could say nothing then.

Soon Lou showed she was in her element, as different questions were thrown at her by the surging crowd. "What kind of work is that?" "Who did this?" "Is that in pastel, or crayons?" "Do tell me what that lovely design is for?" etc., etc. — to all of which she, with flushed cheeks and delighted air, gave quick responses, while Jacqueline only now and then was heard to answer.

At length a refined, indeed noble-looking, gentleman, accompanied by two ladies, stopped before a large frame full of small pen and ink drawings, labeled

"Five minute sketches," in which were bits of home life, vividly portrayed. Two or three figures often occurred in them, one of which, in cap a little awry, and glasses pushed above the forehead, was both graphic and quaint.

"Whose are these?" asked the gentleman, examining them intently, "they show more real merit than any thing else in the collection; whose are they?"

Jacqueline appeared not to hear, but Lou stepped briskly forward.

"Those," she said quite loudly, "are by Miss Jacqueline Amory, Mrs. Leavenworth's grand-daughter, and are from nature. She is the most talented artist we have among us; for she does far better work, though she has taken very few lessons."

There was a ring of real heartiness in her tone, and the gentleman, bowing graciously, said with a smile, —

"Thank you: it is evident you can appreciate true merit, for such these sketches certainly show;" and he passed on.

There was a little buzz of voices.

"It's the artist, Mr. C.," said one. "He has just returned from Europe, where he had a painting on exhibition at the last *salon*. It was a great compliment."

As Jacqueline turned away her blushing face, she found herself opposite the two young men whom she

had invited here, and, as if involuntarily, they bowed and smiled in a congratulatory way.

"Have you noticed these Japanese figures?" she asked quickly, to cover her embarrassment, and soon had forgotten it in her efforts to make them feel satisfied and at home.

She even neglected two or three gentlemen just beyond, among whom was Mr. Case, but he did not seem to mind it at all; for, as she finally found time to answer their inquiries, he found means to whisper, —

"That's right, Miss Jacqueline. I see you go to the bottom of things, and really understand just what people this entertainment is designed to help. I wish I had more workers like you! Too many forget the substance in the glitter and fuss."

When the evening was ended she met Lou face to face in the passage-way back of the cloak-room, where for a moment, they were quite alone.

She stopped and impulsively held out her hand.

"Lou, it was very nice of you to praise my work," she said eagerly.

"Not at all! It was only the truth; but I confess I wouldn't have said it if you weren't just the dearest, best girl in the world!" and the heartiness of the kiss she gave Jacqueline this time was not feigned.

CHAPTER XVI.

A YEAR'S EVENTS.

THE year passed bringing its usual changes, happy and sad. Among the former was Arlene's marriage, which took place about Christmas time. It was a quiet wedding, but very delightful for all that. About fifty friends assembled in the large drawing-room at eleven o'clock one morning, where, under a lovely dove with spread wings, formed of white camellias, carnations, and roses, Mr. Case tied the nuptial knot. Jacqueline stood with a brother of George's, Carl Harper, at present a student at Yale, and Bessie with Bert as her attendant, and a fine-looking set of young people they were!

Mrs. Kenneth was also present, being a guest at the cottage during holiday-week, and felt a thrill of pride as she saw her former charge in such changed circumstances, and seeming to deserve them so well.

After congratulations, there was a delicious little breakfast, and at high noon the newly-wedded pair took the train for a southern trip; first to Florida, thence across country to New Orleans, and home by way of Louisville, etc. They were gone several

weeks, and had a merry home-coming; a large evening reception, and many pleasant "coffees," "high-teas," and so on, among the friends at home.

Then things settled back into their usual quiet regularity once more, for Arlene was still to remain with her mother, who could not well spare her, George going in to business daily, and coming home by the 6:20 train.

Jacqueline was daily growing in body, mind, and soul, and ripening fast into a lovely woman.

Her grandmother had become so dotingly fond of her that Bert sometimes laughingly declared Jaca had put his nose quite out of joint; but he never really felt so, for his own love for her was too great to harbor the least jealousy.

Miss Patty was gradually failing in health, as all could see; the severe rheumatic twinges of the winter left her weak and languid, and as the heats of summer came on she seemed to have little strength left. One day she sent for Mr. Randall, and had a long talk with him, which resulted in his coming again next day with a lawyer, and when Jacqueline came home from school they were just leaving the house.

She bowed in response to their salutations, and watched them a little wonderingly as they passed down the street, but Jacqueline was not a curious

girl and seldom asked questions, so had soon quite forgotten the matter in absorbing school-duties, for examinations were soon coming on.

Daily Miss Patty failed, until at length she was often confined to her bed; but she suffered no pain now, and seemed quite content to lie quietly listening to her friends, as they read to her, or talked softly around her bed. Either Mrs. Leavenworth or Arlene, came every day, as well as other friends and neighbors; and the young people put aside many gayer pleasures to keep her company.

She still kept up a keen interest in all their doings, and when Bert's graduating-day came, insisted that she was able to attend the exercises, which were to be held in the town-hall. For days they had all been kept busy, even with extra help, to furnish the floral decorations; but Miss Patty insisted that the choicest flowers should be reserved for "that dear boy," and with her own hands fashioned an exquisite open book, all of tiny rosebuds and violets, to be presented when he appeared on the rostrum.

When Bert found she was determined to go, he had Jim carry one of his grandmother's easy chairs over to the hall, and place it near the rostrum; and here, between Mrs. Leavenworth and Arlene, the dear old lady listened proudly; while Jim, in the cloak-room, kept guard over a tray-full of baskets, bouquets, etc.,

with which to deluge the young graduate at the proper moment.

And really this floral tribute was deserved, for Bert's address was keen, sparkling, and original, thoroughly committed, and well delivered; while he bore off the prizes for Greek and mathematics.

Lou Talbot was also a graduate (as well as seven others whom we do not know) and acquitted herself well, her composition being in a satirical vein, with a good many apt local hits. Lou was now Jacqueline's firm friend, for this girl never did things by halves, and when she liked a person would stand by her through good and evil report. She had indeed greatly improved in character, for since she had been ready to acknowledge herself so mistaken once, she was less hasty in judging by the mere outward appearance of those whom she met.

After the compositions and addresses, the graduates sang a pretty class-song, composed by one of their number; then the diplomas were awarded, with a few congratulatory words by Mr. Randall, the president of the school-board. This concluded the formal exercises. Then came a social half-hour of visiting, congratulations, music, etc., in the midst of which Jacqueline discovered that Miss Patty looked very tired, and asked if Jim might take them home in the

carriage at once, to which of course her grandmother assented.

Arrived at the cottage, Jacqueline hurried to get her into bed, for she seemed very faint; but after resting a little while, she smiled brightly, and said she felt "all right."

But she scarcely touched her supper, and seemed so inclined to sleep that when Bert and Bessie came over in the evening, to talk about the day's doings, they sat out-of-doors, and kept their voices carefully subdued, not to disturb her.

Latterly, Jacqueline had slept on a cot in the small room adjoining hers, to be ready in case she should need any thing in the night, but she was seldom called upon. It was very warm this night, and she felt half tempted to go into her own more comfortable chamber, but finally concluded to lie down here for a time, at least.

She had dropped into the first heavy slumber of girlhood when the quick tinkle of Miss Patty's bell sounded amid her dreams, and, bounding up, still half asleep, she stumbled to her bedside, to find her looking very pale in the dim light.

"You may wake Hannah," she said in a weak voice, but quite composedly, and, both wondering and fearing, Jacqueline hastened to do so.

Then, running back, she poured out some of the

cordial kept for emergencies, and raising the gray head from the pillow, said gently, —

"Drink it, aunty; you seem faint."

She drank obediently and as Jacqueline laid her back, whispered, —

"Dear child! what a comfort you've been!"

Then her eyes closed over her white cheeks, and her breath seemed labored. Jacqueline turned appealingly to Hannah, who had just entered.

"She seems very bad — what can we do? Hadn't you better wake one of the neighbors, and send for the doctor?"

Hannah gave the sick face an intent look.

"Yes, I had. I'll be right back!" and she hurried out.

Miss Patty's eyes opened again, as Jacqueline bent over her, chafing the cold hands.

"Don't worry, dear! It's only going higher!" she said, brokenly. "You've done your best — God bless you!" and the eyelids dropped, a tremor passed over the body, the lips opened with a gasp — and Miss Patty's soul had fled.

Jacqueline did not realize this, however.

"Oh, she is fainting," she thought, and chafed the hands more briskly, till Hannah came in.

She first bent over the lifeless body a moment, then took Jacqueline's arm and led her gently away.

"It's no use, Miss Jacqueline, she's gone!" she said, solemnly.

"Gone? gone?" cried the poor girl, not fully comprehending, "what do you mean?"

"She's dead, child, quite dead; nothing can help her, now," and the burst of grief that followed showed how little prepared Jacqueline was for such an event.

Soon the doctor arrived, only to confirm Hannah's decision; then word was sent to the Leavenworths, and George, Arlene, and Bert were quickly on hand. After a little, however, they gently urged Jacqueline home with Arlene, leaving the others to see to the last sad offices for the dead — for it was decided the funeral should take place from the cottage, the home to which she had so persistently clung, and which she would only leave to go to her last resting-place.

The day of her burial was warm and showery, yet the house and front yard were full of those who came to honor the large-hearted, lonely woman, who, having no ties of kindred, was yet a friend to all humanity.

They laid her in the Leavenworth lot just opposite the grave which had received the recovered remains of poor Celia Amory, and as Mr. Case feelingly referred to the lately living woman, who had so well filled the place of the dead mother, few eyes were dry.

It was a terrible shock to Jacqueline, and she did not get over it for weeks. Indeed, she seemed so pale and drooping in her black clothes, that her grandmother grew alarmed, and one day, about a fortnight later, when the girl had just gone languidly from the room, leaving Mrs. Leavenworth and Arlene over their sewing, the former said abruptly, —

"Arlene, I don't like Jacqueline's looks at all!"

"Nor I, mother. She has grown fast, this year, besides studying hard, and this sad shock seems to have sapped all the strength she had left."

"Yes, it is true. I wish we could take her to the mountains."

"And why not, mother?"

"Only my laziness, I suppose. I'm so wedded to my own home; and you, I suppose, wouldn't leave George?"

"I should dislike to. He doesn't feel he can take more than a week or so this summer, and we were going to run down to the beach for that. The Tiltons have asked us to their cottage — still, if you wish it, I could, of course; but why don't you let them go alone?"

"Who? Jacqueline and Bert?"

"Yes; they're old enough, and have a good deal of discretion. We could make all necessary arrangements by letter."

"Well, that's an idea, certainly! It's not a long journey, and every thing in traveling is so simplified nowadays. Possibly Mr. Randall and Bessie would go."

"Unless he carries out that California scheme."

"Yes — of course that would interfere," — and Mrs. Leavenworth relapsed into thoughtfulness.

Meanwhile Hannah had been kept at the cottage, to look after it and the greenhouse, until further arrangements could be made, though Jacqueline had never been back there except to attend the funeral.

One morning, to her astonishment, she was summoned to the library, and found her grandmother, with Mr. Randall and their lawyer, sitting apparently in solemn conclave.

The former said as she entered, —

"Mr. Smails, this is my grandchild, Miss Amory," and the lawyer bowed politely as Jacqueline slipped into a seat.

Her grandmother continued, —

"My dear, these gentlemen have come to read Miss Patty's will, and thought you would like to hear it;" and soon, amid a confusion of "whereases," "aforesaids," "to wits," etc., Jacqueline began to understand that she was left sole inheritor of all Miss Patty had died possessed of — viz., one house and lot (which, by the description, she would never have

guessed to be the cottage and its surroundings), as well as all personal property, and other means, consisting of a mortgage, and some bank funds, to the amount of a few thousand dollars.

"Is it all mine?" asked Jacqueline wonderingly, as Mr. Smails folded up the document, and turned smilingly towards her.

"There will be nobody to dispute it, I think, Miss Amory."

"But what shall I do with it?"

He laughed with evident enjoyment of this *naïveté*.

"People do not usually find difficulty in disposing of money; the question oftener is how to get it to spend!"

Jacqueline blushed.

"But grandma never lets me feel any such want. I wish" —

"Well, what do you wish, child?" asked Mrs. Leavenworth.

"It would be so nice just to do for others with this money; it would please Aunt Patty so, wouldn't it, grandma?"

"I think it would, my darling, and I'm very glad you have thought of any thing so unselfish. We can plan about all that later; meanwhile, Mr. Randall (who, as you notice, is your trustee and guardian)

knows of a young man who would like to rent the cottage, and keep up the greenhouse."

"Yes," said that gentleman, "he is under-foreman at Platt's Mills, and a steady, honest fellow, and has lately married a Mary Blake who used to work for us, and who, Mrs. Feegles says, was a nice, tidy, little body. I really don't think you could do better."

"Oh, I'll let you manage all that," laughed Jacqueline, with some embarrassment, and the conclave broke up.

But, next day she was again summoned to the library, and there, with Mr. Randall, stood the very young man who had been at the art entertainment a year ago, not the rather belligerent Sam, but the more quiet of the two. He bowed politely, hat in hand, as he said, —

"Miss Amory, my name is John Treat, and I am the man who would like to rent your cottage."

It made Jacqueline feel queer enough to be thus deferred to, and after a deprecatory glance towards Mr. Randall, she said, —

"I believe that is all right, and I'm glad it's *you*, Mr. Treat. I remember you well."

He colored with pleasure.

"Thank you, Miss Amory. Mary and I'll take good care of it, for your sake if for nothing else, for we know how much you've done to help this town."

"I?" Jacqueline's eyes opened widely.

"Yes, ma'am. Every body says it's largely you and your brother that makes the Y. M. C. A. so different from what it used to be, for now we working-men are made as welcome as anybody. Then, all of us mill-folks know how good you were to poor little Jenny Jones that time she got hurt in the machinery; and how you sewed for that drunken Pat Flynn's youngsters, so's to keep 'em in school last winter, till the man's actually getting ashamed of himself, and beginning to be somebody. And I know, too, that you're the one that made me feel less bitter towards these rich folks, and sometimes I think my talks to the boys had something to do in staving off that strike last January. You've got a good name among us poor folks, miss."

Sudden tears sprang to Jacqueline's eyes, and involuntarily she stepped forward and held out her hand.

"You know I was poor myself once, very poor, till good Miss Barnes took me, and I found my friends; so I know that there is really no difference between the poor and rich, except such as pride and envy make. Christ died for us all, and honored the poor by being one of them, when he lived on earth."

"That's so," said John with interest, "I never thought of that," and then the talk went back to busi-

ness, but Jacqueline had won a life-long friend in honest John Treat of Platt's Mills.

A few days later, as Jacqueline and Bert were walking in the garden after supper, admiring the profusion of flowers in bloom, their grandmother left George and his wife on the piazza, and came down to join them.

Each lovingly offered an arm, and as she paced slowly between them, she said, —

"What do you children say to a mountain trip?"

"Oh, grandma! that *would* be fine," cried Bert, and Jacqueline looked up with a brighter smile than she had worn for some time.

"I've always longed to see the mountains nearer," she said, looking wistfully off to their shadowy forms against the horizon.

"Well, then, what do you say to going alone?"

"Alone? We two? Why, grandma!"

"Yes, Bert. I really don't feel as if I cared to leave my own comfortable quarters, and Arlene wouldn't leave George. I see no reason why you couldn't go alone."

"Not the least," said Bert eagerly, "I can take care of Jaca perfectly well."

So it was arranged, and they hastened over to tell Bessie.

"Oh, papa," she cried, "how I wish I could go, too. Why don't you take me?"

"Well, to tell the truth, Queenie, I'm daily expecting a permit to join the governmental exploring party that's to visit certain parts of California. I'd thought I could take you and Mrs. Feegles, and leave you at Los Angeles, perhaps, while we men went into the wilds."

"Yes, but — does Mrs. Feegles want to go?"

"Oh, you know how she dreads traveling, as well as I do, but of course, she wouldn't let you stay there all alone so long."

"Then — do, papa, let me go with Bert and Jaca — do! I should be too forlorn for any thing, away off among strangers so — and you'll be gone a good while, won't you?"

"Perhaps three weeks in the wilderness, besides what time I intended to give in trotting about with you. But I don't know, — this might be the better plan," and, after considerable talk, it was decided to be so.

One delightful afternoon, Jacqueline, feeling inclined for a stroll, found herself rather aimlessly headed towards the cottage, and with a half-dread, half-eagerness, to see it again, kept on until she had reached the gate.

To her relief, for she would have been pained to

see it look neglected — every thing seemed much as usual. The vines were neatly tied up, the turf smoothly mowed, and white curtains gently swayed in the open windows. As she slowly opened the gate, a light-hearted burst of song came from within; then the hall-door opened, and a nice-looking young woman, in a neat, light calico, stepped out upon the porch. She at once perceived Jacqueline, who had now reached the steps, and said, quickly, —

"Miss Amory?"

Jacqueline bowed her head. "And you, I presume, are Mrs. Treat?"

"Yes, ma'am, won't you come in?" and she led the way, with alacrity, Jacqueline following in a sort of daze, so queer it seemed to be received as a guest, where she had so often bounded in, entirely and perfectly at home.

The tears filled her eyes, and when she had taken a seat in the parlor (still almost the same, for the cottage had been rented furnished), she was sobbing in her handkerchief.

"Dear Miss Amory, I'm so sorry," said the kind voice at her elbow, "we've tried not to change any thing — John and I — and hoped it would seem like home to you."

"It does," sobbed Jacqueline, "I had expected to

find it much changed;" and she dried her eyes, and tried to smile.

Then little Mrs. Treat, who was but a girl herself, hurried to tell how they enjoyed it all, and how well the garden prospered.

"But you must see the greenhouse," she added; "that heliotrope is a perfect sight. It has over forty blossoms."

It was the very bush to which Miss Patty had once compared her mother, and the memory of those words thrilled through Jacqueline as she rose to follow. Gradually she grew calmer, and then they took a slow ramble over house and grounds, noticing every thing, from the shelf John had put up in Jacqueline's old bedroom (which they now occupied), to the last blossom on the Gloire de Dijon rose-bush.

"It has been a dear old home to me," said Jacqueline, as they returned to the parlor. "I hope you and Mr. Treat will be happy here."

"Yes, I believe we will," said the little wife earnestly, "for John's a steady fellow, and earns good wages, and I try to bear my part, — Miss Amory, *won't* you take off your hat and stay to supper with us? John would be so proud."

Jacqueline saw she really meant it, so she only hesitated a minute.

"If you will not think it strange for me to go home

directly afterwards. Grandma might worry, you see; besides, I have several last things to see to before we start for the mountains," and she explained how they intended to leave next day.

By and by Mary excused herself to go and get tea, and Jacqueline, picking up a book, was soon absorbed in its contents.

John, coming up the path a little later, was surprised to see a dainty, black-robed figure swaying to and fro in a little rocker, with head bent over a book; and slipping around the house before she noticed him, burst into the kitchen with the abrupt question, —

"Mary, is that Miss Amory on the porch?"

"Yes, John."

"What in the world is she doing here?"

"Why, John Treat! She is visiting us, to be sure."

"Visiting — *us?* You don't tell me!" and the next minute he was going through a vigorous cleansing process, to make himself nice for the supper-table.

It was a really neat little tea, and Jacqueline seemed so quietly at ease that she made the others so.

She found John a clear-headed, sensible fellow, with a good knowledge of his work, and really enjoyed

her talk with the two. She took pains to give his wife all the information possible in regard to the care of the greenhouse, and left them afterwards with hearts aglow with pride and hope, and a most sincere admiration and respect for their little landlady.

CHAPTER XVII.

TO THE MOUNTAINS.

THERE was a merry gathering in the station-house to see our three travelers off, several of the young people being present, as well as most of the older members of the two families. Mr. Randall was bustling about, getting their tickets, and giving last instructions; while Arlene was talking more quietly with Jacqueline and Lou Talbot. Bert and Bessie, with the Gilberts, formed another group.

Mrs. Leavenworth had said her good-bys at home, and George had been obliged to take an earlier train for the city; but Jim was on hand, looking after their traps, his face on a broad grin, and his whole air one of elaborate concern.

"Hold on, Jim, that's not mine," cried Bert, as the fellow, hearing the whistle of the incoming train, caught up a stray valise, lying near.

"Beg pahdon. Mr. Bert, is this youahs, an' whah's Miss Jackleen's?"

"Here they are," cried Bert, "and here's the train, at last," and in a moment they were climbing aboard,

shaking hands, and kissing good-bys amid the scramble for seats, till, with last merry words and waving of handkerchiefs, they were fairly off, *en route* for the White Mountains.

They had found roomy seats in a chair car, and were soon comfortably disposed. Jacqueline, flushed with all this excitement, looked more like herself than for some time previously. She had had so very little experience in traveling that every thing was both novel and delightful to her, and for a time she only cared to sit still and take it all in, in her quiet self-contained way.

But Bessie and Bert were full of fun and laughter, and, after a while, drew her into it in spite of herself, for Jacqueline was growing quick at repartee, and could hold her own even with Bessie.

Their destination to-day took them to the north, and therefore, away from the city which was their usual point of departure, and the through train only stopped at the most important towns.

At one of these a youth was helped into the car by two gentlemen, his pale face and halting walk showing that he was an invalid.

After bidding him an affectionate good-by, the elder of these left the car, while the younger remained and carefully arranged every thing for his comfort. The boy, of about Bert's age, leaned back wearily, and the

young man soon had mixed a strong sling, whose odor filled the car, and held it to his lips.

After drinking it greedily the youth seemed to feel better. A little color came into his face, and glancing about, he perceived our group of young people interestedly watching him.

From that time on, his quiet scrutiny of their every movement was almost constant. He seemed to care nothing for the beautiful upland scenery through which their route now lay, but with head leaned back, and eyes half closed, gave his whole attention to them.

They had left home soon after noon, and as it grew toward six o'clock Bert sent the porter for one of the handy little tables which, hooked into supports between the broad windows, and covered with a clean towel, forms such a convenient place for private lunches. The girls set theirs out in a neat, tasty way, and the pressed chicken and dainty sandwiches, with a fancy pot of jam, and some cake, neatly boxed, were appetizing enough to tempt almost any palate.

As Jacqueline turned from surveying her work, she noticed a wistful look in the sick boy's eyes, which touched her ever-sympathetic heart, and leaning towards Bessie, with the pretense of handing her a Japanese napkin, said quickly, with a backward glance, —

"Let's ask *him*, we have more than enough."

Bessie shrugged her shoulders slightly.

"All right, if you wish it, but he doesn't look appetizing somehow."

"True enough," added Bert, "but you shall have him if you like, Jaca. I'll go ask him," and stepping to the youth he gave his polite invitation.

The boy's chalky face colored slightly, as he said, —

"I believe we are well supplied, but — it looks very pleasant, and there's room for four — would you let me bring some eatables? Webber, won't you hunt up something nice in our basket?"

The young man smiled.

"Certainly," and as the boy feebly rose, added, "let me help you, Arthur."

But he waved him back.

"No, just give me my cane. I may lean a little on you, mayn't I?" and Bert brought him gently to the others.

"My name is Arthur Phelps," he whispered quickly, before they reached the girls, and Bert thus introduced him, Bessie in turn presenting Bert.

"We're sorry we haven't room for your friend," began Jacqueline, but he cut her short.

"Oh, he's no friend, only a sort of companion, doctor, etc. A poor medical student father picked up to

look after me. He's all right so long as he has a book."

He ate as daintily as a bird, but with a certain relish, quite ignoring however, the delicious fruit and Frenchy pasties that Webber brought at his request, but declaring the pressed chicken and delicately spread bread, the nicest he had ever tasted.

"I haven't eaten so much in a month," he exclaimed, with some animation, leaning back contentedly; "this is *so* different from hotel fare. It was kind of you to invite me. Webber!"

"Yes, sir," and the pleasant-faced young man came forward.

"Why don't you open a bottle of champagne? That's just the finish we need."

For an instant there was nothing said, then Jacqueline spoke up firmly, —

"Not for us, thank you. We never touch wine."

"Never touch wine? How strange! Why, I live on it! Couldn't get along without it. Never mind, Webber, they don't care for it, and really I've eaten such a supper I don't know that I do."

Webber retired with a relieved air, and soon their talk, from vague generalities, became more personal, and they found that all were headed for the same lovely spot, Jackson, New Hampshire, that charming village in the very heart of the White Mountains,

with the most delightful drives branching from it in every direction.

"Where are you going to stop?" asked the stranger eagerly.

"We've engaged board at a private house," said Bert.

"Oh, pshaw, that'll be dull as mud. Why don't you go to Wentworth Hall, or some of those big hotels, where there's some life and fun? Do you stop at Fabyan's, to-night?"

"Yes," said Bessie, adding spiritedly, "and we go to the private house because we like freedom and a good time better than fine clothes and fripperies."

He laughed carelessly.

"Every one to his taste. I'm afraid it would be dull enough for me after the Richelieu; father and I have always lived at a hotel. You see," dropping his voice a little, "I have no mother."

Jacqueline and Bert looked meaningly at each other, and Arthur, glancing at the former's black dress, said quickly, —

"Nor you, either?"

"No," said Bert quietly.

"Nor I," added Bessie, in the same low tone; and the pathetic sense of their common bereavement seemed, somehow, to draw the four closer together.

After a little, Arthur said, —

"You see I have been sick?"

They bowed.

"It was from a wound."

"A wound!" cried Bert, and the girls looked up in astonishment.

"Yes, I shot myself."

"Oh! oh!" cried all.

"Accidentally, of course," he added, with a smile. "I got a notion that it was a very cute thing to carry a revolver, and father's always so busy he didn't realize how much of the time I had one about me. One day I was changing it from my outer coat to my hip pocket, and somehow it dropped and went off, shooting me through the leg. It splintered the bone slightly, but I'd have got off all right, if blood-poisoning hadn't set in; but that came near finishing me!"

Jacqueline shuddered, thinking of poor Nick.

"I'm coming out all right," Arthur went on, "but it's kept me down for nearly five months, and it sometimes seems as if I never should get strong! So now I'm going to try the mountains."

It was nine o'clock when they reached Fabyan's, and the chill of the air, as well as the great, shadowy, heights all about them, told of the higher levels they had reached.

There was something inexpressibly lonely in the outlook to Jacqueline, as they stepped from the train,

in spite of the bright lights and the murmur of gay voices in the hotel. For, under the silent stars, stood those equally silent and eternal mountains, known as the Presidential Range, of which Washington is (as it should be) the highest, making a strange, weird, dense outline upon the sky at this time of night.

The girls followed Bert into the great office, full of chattering groups of ladies and gentlemen gathered about the fire, — for though July, it was needed, — and, after registering, were shown to their rooms, that of the girls being next to Bert's.

"Oh!" said Jacqueline, as the porter set down their bags, and left them, "is this all the light we can have?"

"I suppose so; 'light of other days' with a vengeance, isn't it?" laughed Bessie, for their only illumination was from two candles, placed on brackets each side of the dressing table.

"And I wanted to write to grandma!" complained Jacqueline.

"Well, we can go into the reading-room for that; all the public rooms are evidently well lighted."

So, as soon as they had removed a little of the dust of travel, they wandered down the stair-case, and first peeped into the long parlor, where there was a crowd of people. One musical group was gathered about the

piano, others around card-tables, while some quietly read or conversed in corners.

They took a promenade around the house on the broad veranda, nearly deserted now, as the evening was so chill, though a few young people promenaded like themselves, or, well-wrapped, swung in the hammocks, and rocked in the great arm-chairs.

Through the windows they could see the ball-room, brightly lighted, while three or four musicians, on a small platform at one end, played for the dancers, — a merry crowd, — some in evening dress, but many in the picturesque mountain costume; the girls in loose, short skirts, with untanned low shoes, the gentlemen in knickerbockers, and flannel blouses.

"Isn't it pretty?" said Jacqueline, in round-eyed wonder. "But dear me! we must get off those letters."

So the three were soon quietly busy in the convenient reading-room, with its long table well supplied with guide-books, writing materials, and newspapers. Bert indited an epistle to George, and Bessie one to her father, besides Jacqueline's first loving letter to her grandmother; then, tired and sleepy, they were glad to go to bed.

The next morning they were all up betimes, and out on the veranda, gazing with all their eyes at the

grandeur about them. Bert had brought a fine pair of field glasses, and they had soon singled out Mount Washington from the row of lofty peaks, and were looking through them at the long low buildings on its summit, which appear as much like a hen-coop as any thing, from this distance; and watching also the vast wreaths of clouds, lower down, as they broke and dissolved before the brilliant morning sun.

They were to make the ascent by rail, and, soon after breakfast, had taken their seats in the odd-looking car, pushed upward by the odder-looking engine, with the boiler at an angle of forty-five degrees (in order to be upon a level when on the incline) and a great central cog-wheel, which enables it to grip the parallel bar of the central rails, and thus climb its steep upward path.

As they went higher and higher, a feeling of awe crept over the group, and the girls' faces grew a little pale. By the time they reached that steep incline called "Jacob's Ladder," when the car seemed advancing almost vertically, and they looked sheer down on either side upon trees that seemed like shrubs, and cruel jagged rocks which would be death to one who should fall upon them; while, here and there, desolate-looking piles of stones, surmounted by a cross, showed where some poor traveler had wandered from the path and perished, Jacqueline

clutched her slanting seat with both hands, and gazed distressfully at Bert.

"Oh, will we ever get down again?" she whispered.

"Why, Jaca, where's all your bravery?" he asked, in return trying to look unconcerned, as he gently touched her hand.

"I don't know," she answered, making an effort to smile, "if a danger comes to me I can face it, but I hate to put myself in the way of it; still, I suppose God is in the mountains as well as down below," and steadying herself with this thought, she began once more to look about, and try to realize all this grandeur of utter desolation, for now they had passed the line of vegetation, and were in a wilderness of rock and cloud.

Still, it was with a long sigh of relief that they found themselves safely landed on the platform by the Summit House, whose celebrated St. Bernard dog stood to welcome them, as he does every car-load, grave and courteous as an Arab chieftain.

The wind blew great guns, and the clouds below them formed and separated, giving occasional vistas of scenery that almost took their breath away.

After leaving their extra wraps in-doors, and registering, they went out, along the plank walk, and down the successive flights of steps which lead to the

carriage road; and, walking down that a little way, seated themselves on the rocky barrier beside it, to look off upon the vast spaces below, now hidden by clouds, now showing clear and wonderful through the rifts.

Jacqueline drew a long breath, and said slowly, —

"I wonder if we'll feel like this when we get to heaven, as if the earth with its temptations and sin was so far away. It seems to me it would be very hard for any one to think mean thoughts up here."

Just then there came a stronger gust than usual, and Bert's hat went flying over the rocky barrier on to the jagged rocks just beyond.

"Not so very," he laughed, springing forward; and began to climb the barrier.

"No, no!" screamed Jacqueline and Bessie together, "don't, don't, Bert, if you should fall."

Thus entreated he hesitated an instant, then said laughingly, —

"Pshaw, girls, it's nothing just to step from here to the next rock where I can pick it up," but even as he spoke another gust lifted it again, carrying it close by, and as Bert almost involuntarily grasped after it, he lost his balance and — went over.

With an awful horror Jacqueline's eyes closed, and she sank back faint and still, but Bessie could see he

had only dropped a few feet upon a jutting bowlder, and was quite unhurt.

"Jaca, Jaca, he's all right!" she screamed, terrified at her look. "Bert, give me your hands; she's going to faint," and soon he had scrambled back to the road in safety, but minus a hat.

Jacqueline revived when she saw him unhurt, but it was with a shudder that she watched the brown Derby careering from rock to rock, over the infinite deeps below.

"I don't like high places," she sighed, "they make me feel as if I must throw myself head-foremost; oh, let's go back to the hotel, it makes me sick," and Bert, tying a silk handkerchief over his short locks, gave her his arm which she gladly accepted.

"Why, Jaca, how weak and trembling you are," he cried, "do you care so much for me?" and her look into his face said more than words.

They ate their dinner in the hotel, then visited the old Tip-top House, now a low cave-like nest for spiders (if spiders go to mountain tops — do they?), examined the great cable chains which pass over all the buildings and anchor them to the solid rock (like the wise man's house, perhaps!), saw their names printed with the list of arrivals in the little daily paper, and lingered long in the interesting quarters of the Signal Service.

But Jacqueline could not forget the awful shock of the morning, and her fine-strung temperament made her feel a depression she could not express in the midst of this strangely lonely, yet so busy spot.

When they took their seats in the car for the return journey, Bert was quite jaunty in a white tennis cap, which bore the words "Summit House" across its front. This he had bought, not so much for a souvenir as because he had to have it, while the girls carried pretty carven relics, and one or two books of mountain photographs.

Their descent was rapid, and seemed, if any thing, more frightful than the ascent had been. Jacqueline sat where she could look out upon the little engine, and her eyes moved from that to the left and right, as vapors sometimes shut them in, and again lifted to give them shudderingly glorious outlooks over mountain and valley.

It was late afternoon when they reached Fabyan's again, and before supper they were in the observation car, ready to take the wonderful trip through Crawford Notch, and over the Frankenstein trestle, amid scenery which is beyond description.

Seated in one of the cane chairs, and gazing out, quite speechless with wondering delight, Jacqueline heard somebody say, —

"Why, Miss Amory," and looking around, discovered their pale companion of yesterday.

They had not seen him since last night, and he now explained that he had been in bed all day, suffering from over-exertion the day before.

"Where's your brother?" he asked.

Jacqueline pointed him out, near the rear platform with Bessie, and turning to the view outside, said pleasantly, —

"Here's where we forget to use our tongues, this keeps our eyes so busy."

"Yes," said Arthur, and both were silent again.

It was late twilight when they reached Glen Station, and left the cars for the swinging mountain coach, drawn by four horses, which stood awaiting passengers.

"Can you set us down at Mr. Pack's?" asked Bert, and receiving an affirmative answer, took his place on the broad seat between Webber and Arthur, opposite the girls.

"So you're bent on that poky private house instead of a hotel?" asked the latter, laughing a little.

"Yes, our rooms are engaged," said Bert.

"Well, I guess we'll try Wentworth Hall; they say it's fine, and I can't stand stupidity," he added with a rather disagreeable accent.

"That's one reason why we go by ourselves, we

know *we're* not stupid, whatever others may be," said Bessie, with good-natured pertness, and the laugh that followed prevented offense.

Our three friends after quite a long drive, alighted in the darkness at a very white fence, before as white a house, and going up the sloping path, knocked on the lintel of the wide-open door. A woman appeared quickly from an inner room, shading a lamp with one hand and peering out at them with dark, sharp eyes.

"We are Miss Randall and the Amorys," said Bert briskly, "Mrs. Leavenworth engaged our rooms."

"Yes, yes, that's all right, come in, come in."

She led them into an ordinary country parlor, stiff with hair-cloth furniture, and hideous with sprawling wall paper, green window-shades, and a red and yellow carpet.

"Have you had supper?" she asked again, in the same brisk way.

"No," said Bert, "we left Fabyan's before five."

"All right; want to go to your rooms while I'm getting it?"

"If you please," and they soon found themselves — that is, the girls — in a low square chamber, its sides slightly sloping, but with three great windows from which there must be a breezy outlook by day.

Soon a bell summoned them to a good-sized dining-room, where, upon the end of a long table, plates were

laid for three. Their supper was plain, but wholesome and well-cooked, and after it was over all were glad to seek the rest they so much needed.

The last thing Jacqueline heard was a burst of talk and laughter through the open windows, as if a merry party were coming up the path, then she turned over on her pillow and knew nothing more till broad daylight.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

They were awakened by a loud rap on their door.

"Girls! girls!" cried Bert's rapturous voice, "get up and see the most glorious morning that you ever dreamed of!" and, with a merry remark or two over his enthusiasm, they obeyed.

But their sudden exclamations, as they reached the window, quite vindicated Bert. Jackson lies in a lovely valley at the foot of Thorn Mountain, with the Presidential Range lying to the west and north. The house where they now were fronted one of the romantic roads, which wind about through all this favored region, and, being upon a slight elevation, commanded the whole charming valley and the mountains beyond.

At a little distance down the road was a large hotel, above which flags were flying, while the broad verandas completely surrounding it were well filled with gayly-painted rockers, and hammocks.

In front was a large lawn, made charming by a central fountain and parterres of flowers, and at one side

was a tennis-court, beyond which picturesque pavilions and awnings were stretched.

A shower in the night made the air of crystal purity, while the few ragged remnants of vapor were chasing each other up the mountain sides, as if fleeing from the searching eyes of an angry sun.

"Oh!" said Jacqueline, with a long breath, "we ought to thank God just for being alive!"

Bessie turned, and looked at her. She seemed unusually lovely in her white robe, with the dusky hair tossed about her face, which shone with some inner light, and, putting an arm about her, Bessie said, lovingly, —

"You sweet child! Why is it you always remember to give praise where it is due? I was feeling as exultant as you, but I hadn't thought to thank Him!"

"I don't know," said Jacqueline, reflectively, "you see it was a very wonderful thing to me, when I felt so utterly alone in the world, to find I had such a powerful Father, and since I fully realized it I have always felt glad and proud to turn to Him first, in *every* thing."

This was, indeed, the key-note of Jacqueline's unusual character. Alongside of her sensitiveness, ran a vein of thorough appreciativeness, which lifted her far above those natures which accept every thing

as their due, and kept her humble and sweet through events which might have spoiled her character, had it been attuned to a lower key.

But, joined to her father's artistic, pleasure-loving nature, was her mother's perfect conscientiousness and patience, with a sweet, childlike gratitude and fidelity all her own. So, as soon as love had opened her heart to good influences, there was little fear that any act of her own would close it again.

They hastened to dress, and join Bert on the piazza below, which crossed the east front and side of the house, commanding the same view as that from the girls' windows above. At one end a young lady sat sketching, and, near by, an elder one was down on the steps between two children, a boy and girl of perhaps twelve and ten years — the trio evidently just in from a walk, for they were in full mountain costume, and carried alpenstocks. They were very busy now, sorting over the pine needles they had gathered for pillows, their balsamic odor being delicious after the rain — and all were talking gayly as our young people appeared.

The three new-comers bowed slightly, and the elder lady rose and stepped forward, saying graciously, —

"You are our new boarders, I believe? Mrs. Pack told us she was expecting you. Is this Miss Amory?" looking at Bessie.

"No, I am Bessie Randall, and this is my friend, Miss Jacqueline Amory — also her brother, Bert."

"And I am Mrs. Chapman, and this young lady, always hard at work, is Miss Ransome; while these" (putting a hand on each child's head) "are my Will and Minnie."

Pleasant greetings were exchanged, when Bessie asked, —

"And are we all the boarders?"

"Oh, no; there's Mrs. Willey and the Alden brothers — two fine young college fellows who are off on their usual two-mile tramp before breakfast; besides Miss Sheppard and Miss Yates — two teachers from Chicago. I believe that's all."

"You forget the baby!" put in Miss Ransome, in a clear, incisive voice, which made you feel at once that she was something a little out of the ordinary run of young ladies.

"Oh, yes, the baby," laughed Mrs. Chapman, "how could I forget the baby?"

Just then two athletic young men, in flannel blouses and knickerbockers, and carrying stout alpenstocks, came around the end of the piazza, and, before they had noticed the strangers, began to banter Miss Ransome.

"It's the very same sketch I'm sure," cried one, who was the taller, and a blonde; "now, Miss Theo, why don't you give us something new?"

"I wasn't aware I had given you any thing yet," was her quick retort, and the other brother, darker and more slender, cried out, —

"There, Thornton, served you right. Now, Miss Theo, *I* can appreciate your labor, for" —

Just then he perceived our friends, and stopped abruptly, while Mrs. Chapman in her character as chaperone, began introductions at once.

By the time the breakfast bell summoned them in, they were feeling quite at home, and were soon made acquainted with the others about the table, where Mrs. Pack poured coffee, while a pale, shy-looking woman waited upon the guests.

The Chicago teachers proved to be pleasant-faced ladies, and Mrs. Willey, a large, handsome blonde, all smiles, dimples, and white teeth, with such a hearty laugh and obliging manners that she seemed by common consent to be the leader in all excursions and fun.

It was a very lively table, with no lack of small talk or witticisms, some indeed, rather too sharp and personal for comfort. Bessie's eyes sparkled, and she, as well as Bert, soon began to put in a word now and then; but Jacqueline, though her face spoke for her, said comparatively little. They had just risen and were strolling out of doors again, when a childish shout was heard from the lawn, and a little fellow of

perhaps three years, his large head one mass of close flaxen curls, came forward, trying with all his small might to half drag, half carry a big gray cat, not much smaller than himself.

His sturdy little form was thrown back, and his face was red with the effort; but, though the cat scratched and struggled, he would not give up and let it go.

A burst of laughter greeted him.

"Hang on, Teddy!" "Don't let go, there's a man!" "Here, this way, my young Trojan!" "Never say die!" were the merry exclamations that encouraged him, as his chubby little bare-kneed legs toiled up the path till, panting and exhausted, he dropped the gray mouser in Mrs. Willey's lap, where, exhausted with her easy laughter, she had sunk down on the bottom step.

She was too much given up to her merriment to notice just what had happened until, with a quick "meouw," the creature had sprung from her arms, and fled, spitting, up a tree.

The baby looked at her, then at his escaped prey, then around at the noisy group, still laughing and clapping their hands, and his lips began to quiver.

"I binged it for 'oo," he said reproachfully, to the helpless Mrs. Willey; "'oo said 'oo lited tats," and was about to turn away with angry disdain from this

scene of his unappreciated labors, when Jacqueline suddenly stepped to his side, and said, gently, —

"It was very fine and brave of you, Teddy, but the naughty cat wouldn't stay. How proud I should be, if you'd bring me a flower."

He put his head on one side, regarding her like a saucy robin.

"Who *is* 'oo?" he asked gravely.

"I am Jaca," she said simply, "and I'm going to live here awhile with you; won't you bring me a flower?"

"Does 'oo 'ike f'owers?"

"Very much."

He regarded her critically a moment, while the others checked their laughter to watch the two.

"Does 'oo 'ike *dem?*" pointing to a clump of dandelions in the grass.

"Yes, I like them. I like any flower."

"Well," he said gravely, "den Ted'll det 'oo some, but 'oo's pittier dan dem, Ted sinks," breaking into a brilliant little smile, that showed his pearls of teeth, and setting off the rest into sympathetic laughter.

"Ted always did have good taste," murmured the elder Alden to Miss Ransome slyly; while Teddy, quite ignoring their merriment, proceeded to pick all the dandelions he could find and brought them, a stemless heap, to throw into Jacqueline's lap.

"Now wait a minute, and I'll make you something pretty," she said, and ran indoors a moment, to reappear with a ball of zephyr, also a needle and thread, with which she deftly sewed the dandelions about the ball, covering it entirely to form a large, plushy globe of brightest green and yellow.

"Why, it's really lovely," cried Mrs. Willey, stopping her laughter to admire, and when it was finally given into Teddy's hands he trotted away to show "mamma," the proudest baby in Christendom.

"Whose child is he?" asked Jacqueline of Miss Ransome.

"Oh, the cook's; she's a young widow, poor thing!" was the answer. "Isn't he cunning?"

"Yes," said Jacqueline, "he's a fine little man, and, evidently, a great admirer of Mrs. Willey!"

"No, indeed! I feel you have quite superseded me, and now I fear nothing but a long walk will ease my breaking heart! Come! one couldn't ask a better day for climbing; clear, cool, and delightful, with no clouds to intercept the view; who'll tackle Mount Thorn?"

The party was soon made up of the Aldens (Thornton and Henry), Miss Ransome, the Chapman children, Mrs. Willey, and our young people, and soon met again upon the piazza in their thick, untanned boots, hats well secured, and short untrimmed skirts

— the gentlemen in their knickerbockers, and tennis caps and shoes.

"But we've no alpenstocks!" said Bessie, looking about upon the group.

"You can get them over at the hotel," said Henry Alden, "let me show you the way, Miss Randall," and they paired off — Thornton Alden with Jacqueline, Bert with Miss Theo, and Mrs. Willey hopping along merrily with the children.

They soon suited themselves with sticks, and began their winding, upward walk.

"It isn't far, is it?" asked Jacqueline, innocently, glancing up to the slanting rock upon the summit which stood out boldly in the crystal air.

The rest laughed.

"Not so high as heaven," said Thornton Alden, "but pretty hard to reach, after all. Are you a good climber, Miss Amory?"

"I can't tell, yet, as I have never tried."

"She is, in one sense," said Bessie, with a loving, backward look. "If your mountain *were* heaven, Mr. Alden, she could climb it, I am sure."

"Don't, Bessie!" Jacqueline's cheek flushed hotly, and just then a coach-load filled with a gay party, came dashing towards them, proving a welcome diversion. "G — l — e — n H — o — u — s — e! Hip, Hip, Hurrah!" they spelled and cheered, in

true mountain style, as their handkerchiefs fluttered a greeting.

"Alas! alas!" cried Theo Ransome, as the party passed on, replacing her own *mouchoir* in her jacket pocket, "this is the only drawback to living in a private house; we can not spell its name in that triumphant manner, for it has none!"

"How would P—a—c—k H—o—u—s—e do?" suggested Bert.

"Oh, dreadful!" laughed Bessie. "They'd be sure to understand it *pack-horse*, instead!" and so, in merry nonsense, they beguiled the way, until they stood on the broad, green slope before the last farm-house to be passed, beyond which the road dwindles into a path, and then a series of rough scrambling climbs, till the summit is reached.

"Do let's sit down a minute!" begged Mrs. Willey, dropping upon the grass. "Has anybody strength enough left to draw up a bucket of water from that old-fashioned well?"

"I don't think *I* have!" said Henry Alden, lying lazily back, with his hands beneath his head.

"Henry, you wretch!" cried his brother, giving him a playful kick, and soon the three boys, with much laughter, and great pretense of exertion, were swinging down one end of the great well-sweep, till the bucket came into sight.

"Catch it, quick! before we let go!" cried Henry, and the girls sprang to obey, landing it safely on the curbing.

There was a tin cup hanging from a nail, and, as Theo took a long, deep drink, she cried out, —

"Oh! what delicious water! It is nectar!"

All agreed with her, for this deep mountain well is famed for its cold, sweet water, as many a tourist can testify; and, thus refreshed, they found strength for the last half mile of vigorous climbing which, at last, brought them out upon the slanting rock, from which they could look over a scene whose beauty beggars description.

The descent was a hysterical scramble, till another drink at the well cooled them off a little, and, from there down was only a reasonably steep, down-hill run.

But it would take endless chapters to tell of all the climbs to breezy mountain summits; the quiet drives, on a springy buckboard, through ferny woods, over long, lonely roads where one suddenly wakes from the drowsy spell of the stillness to hear some "view-halloo" close by, and see a great six-horse coach go swinging past; the more exhilarating excursions with some large party upon the top of such a coach, to visit fairy-like cascades and beautiful intervales, where the sudden change from a forest road to a great hotel, alive with guests, and fitted with every

modern luxury, seems like enchantment; or the quiet walk, following some single foot-path deep into the woods, to come out, at last, by some rushing mountain stream, pouring over its rocky barriers in a succession of falls whose beauty would tempt one on for miles; all, or some of these, were daily experiences, until Jacqueline felt almost ashamed (knowing what a ragged, faded, patched side of the world still existed in Gem Street) that she should be allowed to dip so deeply into the luxury and glory of this.

One day as she lay stretched out upon a great, slanting rock, close by the exquisite Glen Ellis Fall, listening idly to the tinkle of Bessie's banjo not far away, and thinking all these things, an idea came to her, almost startlingly at first, but growing clearer and stronger as she pondered upon it,— an idea which was to grow into a life-work, noble and wide-spreading as the great, sheltering forest elm that shaded Jacqueline's head where she lay.

One morning not long after their arrival, they met Arthur Phelps and Mr. Webber, as they were passing Wentworth Hall, and the two came forward quite eagerly to greet them.

Mrs. Chapman, Miss Yates, and the two Aldens were with our friends bent on a walk up the Glen, and the two gladly joined their party, though it was an exertion for Arthur to walk so far.

But he complained that it was desperately lonely at the great hotel.

"It seems as if I should never get acquainted," he said, "every body's in groups, and nobody cares to take us in."

Jacqueline, who, with her usual thoughtful kindness, had accommodated her walk to his, and thus fallen behind the rest, said gayly, —

"I told you so! I told you so! There's no place so lonely as a great crowd, where you don't know a soul. Now, we're just like one family at Mrs. Pack's."

"Isn't there a Mr. Pack?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, but he is clerk at the hotel, and is hardly ever at home. You know our house is a sort of offshoot to this hotel that's close by, so we have a good many privileges there."

"What, for instance?" asked Arthur.

"The tennis ground and reading-room, etc. Of course we hire all our carriages there, and sometimes they get us up a little banquet when we want to be very fine."

"Really, that's not so bad. Do you suppose Mrs. Pack could take us in, too?"

"Let me see, I don't know I'm sure. It's wonderful how much room there is in that house; it's a mystery to me where she puts them all; though, to

be sure, the two teachers room together, and we all double up a good deal. Bert's room isn't much bigger than a dry-goods box, but Bessie's and mine is very comfortable."

"I've a great mind to come over there and try. We might at least get rooms at the hotel by you. I presume it isn't as fine a place, for nothing could be more elegant than Wentworth's, but 'twould be near friends."

Jacqueline smiled slightly, but only said, "Certainly," and sure enough, a few days later, Arthur and Webber were installed in Mrs. Pack's own room, while she bestowed her weary bones somewhere under the roof at night.

For this was the Pack's harvest season. All winter long he might lounge before the fire and whittle out curiosities from pine wood, while she sat opposite fashioning birch bark into attractive souvenirs; but in summer they must be up and doing at real labor, while the winter's fancy work, sold to relic-hunting travelers, brought astonishing prices at the village shop.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEING AND DOING.

It had been a gray, chilly day, the mountains sullenly hiding in mists, and the pleasure-seeking crowd huddling about any fire they could find; and, as Mrs. Pack's rooms afforded no such luxury, her family were perforce driven to the hotel for comfort. Here the long parlor was cheerful with a large open fire, while the great round stove in the office glowed in comfortable ugliness.

There being no bar in these mountain hostelries, and few objectionable guests, the ladies frequent these offices almost equally with the gentlemen.

Our people from the smaller house had made several pleasant acquaintances among them by this time, and often joined in their excursions and pleasures.

They were now the center of a merry crowd about the piano, listening to the singing of Bert, Bessie, Jacqueline, and Arthur, for the latter had a good bass voice to support Bessie's fine alto, while Bert and his sister carried the tenor and soprano.

Arthur was now their almost constant companion,

and was rapidly gaining strength and color,— gaining too some new impressions of life which could not fail to be of use to the motherless, over-indulged boy.

As the merry crowd clamored for "just one more," our quartette having already sung a dozen pieces, at least, Arthur waved his hands deprecatingly and laughed out, —

"Mercy! Mercy! I'm as dry as a codfish-bone, and husky as a last year's raven!" then, as if a sudden thought had struck him, he turned and said, "Webber!"

That young man, who was reading at a little distance, came forward at once, and after Arthur had whispered a few words to him left the room.

In a few minutes a waiter appeared, bearing a tray full of small cakes, followed by another, who carried a small basket of champagne bottles and another of glasses.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said Arthur airily, "let's have something to put fresh courage into us," and he directed the waiters to pass the cake and wine.

Nearly all the party partook, with delighted thanks and words of praise for Arthur's thoughtful hospitality; but though our young friends accepted the cake, they waved the wine aside, untasted. Arthur did not notice this at first; not indeed, until flushed and excited by one full glass which he had taken almost

at a swallow, he turned to see Jacqueline receiving a glass of water from the waiter, who had evidently brought it at her desire.

"Here! here! none of that!" he cried boisterously. "We can't have any prohibitionists in this crowd;" then, noticing Bert's empty glass, he added quickly, "What, Amory, you aren't really such a molly-coddle as to refuse good honest wine?"

"Wait till I see some that is honest and then I'll answer you," said Bert, trying hard to speak lightly, and not show offense.

But Arthur was not so careful.

"Do you mean to say this wine is doctored?" he cried, flushing hotly. "I'll have you know it's the best this place affords, Master Amory. I don't buy cheap wines."

The scene was growing unpleasant; for Bessie, with a short laugh, was about to launch forth one of her most sarcastic speeches, when Jacqueline suddenly sprang up, and said hastily, —

"O Bess! come with me a minute. I want to tell you something," and fairly dragging her out into the office, said earnestly, "Bessie, don't! What good will it do? He isn't himself at all, and 'twould be foolish to cross swords with a half-drunken fellow."

Bert now appeared: his usually good-natured face disfigured by a scowl.

"The puppy," he said angrily. "I've a great mind to go back and thrash him — insulting fop."

"Bert!"

Jacqueline's voice expressed all she did not say; and her brother, looking ashamed of himself, yet moodily defiant, walked over to the stove, and, picking up a newspaper, sat down and pretended to read it; while the girls, with arms intwined, paced slowly up and down the adjoining corridor in earnest conversation.

Meanwhile in the parlor, the fun waxed fast and furious, until even the clerk stepped in and looked about with a doubtful air. Most of those present were young and thoughtless, and did not stop to consider what a spectacle they were making of themselves. At length a few elders, hearing the riotous noise, came down from their rooms, and, by unqualified disapproval of their own young people, broke up the party, and put the others to a shamed silence; the waiters, meanwhile, briskly gathering up the bottles and plates, as if anxious to remove all traces of the affair.

Just then Webber came out of the parlor, his face wearing a pained, downcast look; and as the girls happened to be passing, he said with a hesitating air, —

"I hope you don't blame *me*, young ladies."

Bessie — nothing, if not truthful — said at once, —

"Yes, I do, Mr. Webber! He's only a boy, and it's too bad to let him make such a fool of himself."

"Indeed, I can't help it," he answered earnestly, "he will have it. I'd lose my place if I attempted to control him."

"Sometimes," said Jacqueline, with an upward smile that half took the sting out of her words, "sometimes it is better to give up one's place, rather than one's conscience."

Webber winced.

"You don't know, Miss Amory," he said bitterly, "you don't know what it is to be poor."

Jacqueline's face flushed with earnestness, and an eager light shone in her eyes.

"Yes, I do," she said very low, "and I know, too, what it is to be without a conscience; for God's sake don't let yourself get to that pass, if you have to die in the gutter."

Intense feeling vibrated in her voice, and touched some of the better chords in his nature. He bowed gravely.

"You are right, Miss Amory. It's hard to be poor, but a man can't sell himself for gold, after all. In my strong desire to earn the means for completing my education, I had almost forgotten that," and he turned away with dignity.

Jacqueline's hand was on his arm.

"Forgive me, Mr. Webber. I have no right to judge *any*body; I didn't mean to be rude."

"No, and you haven't been; I know you have really been kind, but it's hard sometimes to swallow the medicine that we know is good for us!" and, smiling rather bitterly, he went abruptly out, disappearing in the thick mists before the door.

In a few minutes Arthur staggered out; his face flushed, and his eyes bleared with the quick-acting liquor.

"Where's Webber?" he asked thickly.

Nobody answered for a moment; then Bert pointed to the door.

"Just gone out," he said, shortly.

Arthur muttered a low oath, and started forward, hastily. As he did so, the toe of his boot caught on some slight projection; he stumbled, and fell forward upon the stove.

With a cry, Bert sprang up, just in time to save him from a dreadful burn, though the force of the shock threw his own right hand against the almost red-hot surface, giving it a long, cruel burn all down the outer edge.

The whole thing sobered Arthur, somewhat, and he cried out, with affright, —

"Oh! Amory, are you hurt?" while the girls, and others, ran hastily forward.

"It's nothing," said Bert, hiding the hand in his handkerchief.

But the clerk insisted on seeing it, and sent an attendant at once for healing lotions and bandages; while Arthur dropping into a seat — shame, gratitude, and a desire to run and hide, all struggling in the soul — watched in moody silence, as Jacqueline tenderly bound it up, her lovely face all a-quiver with pity.

"If I had such a sister I might be a better fellow!" thought Arthur, desperately casting about for some self-excuse. "Why can't I be man enough to tell her I despise myself, and beg Amory's pardon?"

But there were too many others around, he reasoned, — little thinking how he would have redeemed himself in their eyes, had he done so! — and, creeping away finally, he went back into the parlor, and threw himself on a sofa in a fit of sullen misery.

The next day the weather was fair again, but the spirits of our friends did not resume their usual buoyancy. Bert had endured a painful, sleepless night, and Jacqueline had slept almost as little, in her anxious care for him.

Perhaps Arthur and Mr. Webber might have reported the same wakefulness, had they been of a mind to, though it was not physical pain that kept them from dream-land. Even Mrs. Willey, the Alden

brothers, and Miss Ransome, who had been partakers of the wine yesterday, were provoked with themselves for their part in that foolish scene, and breakfast was an unusually quiet affair; only the teachers and Mrs. Chapman's family, who had not been present then, being at all like themselves.

As a part of the family strolled out upon the piazza afterwards, Arthur hesitatingly approached the group composed of Jacqueline, Bert, and Miss Theo, and asked, earnestly, —

"Amory, how is your hand?"

"Oh, doing well," said Bert, with hasty carelessness, "it was nothing."

Arthur shrugged his shoulders.

"Your room happens to be over mine, Amory, and I know you didn't sleep an hour all night! I wish you'd let Webber look at it; he's quite a doctor."

"Thank you, but I've an excellent physician," placing a hand lovingly on Jacqueline's shoulder. "Really, Phelps, you needn't worry; it's nothing serious."

Arthur's face flushed.

"It *was* serious — for me. I beg your pardon for being such a cad!"

"Granted!" said Bert, heartily, giving his left hand.

Arthur grasped it warmly.

"You're a good fellow, Bert! Come, I want a talk with you," and, arm in arm, they stepped off down the path.

Miss Ransome, turning to Jacqueline, said, abruptly, —

"He's more of a man than I thought him!"

"You mean Arthur Phelps?"

"Yes. Tell me, Miss Jacqueline, do you always refuse wine?"

"Yes, always."

"Pardon me if I am intrusive; but have you any special reasons for doing so?"

"The same that I would have for doing any thing I thought would be wrong, and harmful."

"Then you think it is wrong?"

"Yes, I do."

"Strange! I've been accustomed to its use all my life, and never thought of its being wrong, except as people abuse its use, and make fools of themselves!"

"And did no one you love ever do this?"

A sort of spasm passed over Miss Ransome's face.

"Why do you ask?" she said, quickly.

"Because there are so few of us who could answer 'No,' to my question; because there is hardly a person who can use it, without abusing it, and who has not seen the misery of its over-use in some one they care for."

"I believe you are right, Miss Amory. I have felt anger and shame for my — for a friend of mine, when I saw his weakness, but I never thought that this made it wrong for me to drink it, when I never allow myself to over-indulge. It seems as if people ought not to be judged for others' weaknesses. We have enough of our own faults to carry."

"Yet, you would not like to do away with your personal influence, would you? for, if you had no influence for evil, of course you could have none for good. Besides, how can you tell whether this wine-drinking may not, in time, prove too much even for you? Don't you care any more for it now than you did, say, five years ago?"

"Oh, I didn't use to like it at all." Then, seeing what an unconscious admission she had made, she stopped with a blush, adding in a shame-faced way, "It is true; we always had wine with our dinner, and I can remember when I did not care for it, in the least, wouldn't take more than a sip or two, when the servant filled my glass. Miss Jacqueline, you've given me a thought this morning. I'll have to work it out," and bowing her head she went in-doors.

She had scarcely disappeared when Mr. Webber approached the rather secluded bench where Jacqueline was sitting among the vines at the end of the piazza.

"Miss Amory," he said abruptly, "I've made up my mind."

She looked up inquiringly.

"I am going to tell Arthur this morning, that I am resolved to have nothing more to do with this habit of his. It will lose me my place, I'm sure, for that boy's father never crosses him in any thing; and that loss means giving up my chance of next winter's medical course at the Pharmaceutical College, which I had set my heart on."

His face worked a little as he continued.

"I've had my own way to fight for the last six years, and it's been a tough struggle, Miss Amory. Father was a country doctor, and left us about as poor as we could be, and mother was an invalid. I don't know how we got along hardly, it was just from hand to mouth, but I was resolved to be a doctor, myself, and thought I could see where father's failures might teach me the road to success; so I hung on to his books, and studied every minute I could get from work. My sister married a year ago, and," his voice trembled, "a little later mother died. This left me alone, and I resolved nothing should now prevent my having a course at college. When I heard of this place, as companion to Phelps, I jumped at the chance, for it would give me funds enough for next winter's lectures; and, in my eager desire for these, I have

gratified his every wish. But yesterday," he paused as if to command his voice, "when you looked up at me, and spoke as you did, it was my mother's very look and smile. It seemed as if she were speaking to me. She was a good woman, Miss Amory, a true Christian, and would have said the same, were she living. I have thought of her all night, and I am resolved. Even if I must wait another year, I will do what is right."

Jacqueline's hand went out impulsively, and he clasped it with brotherly warmth. There were tears in her eyes as she said, —

"Mr. Webber, I am awfully sorry for you; it is hard, I know. But I do believe you are right to take a stand in this matter, and somehow I can't believe God will let you suffer for it."

"Perhaps not," he said, with a hopeless sort of smile, and turning, walked rapidly around the house, as if not wishing to meet the two,— Bert and Arthur, who were now approaching.

The latter had a brighter look on his face than when he left, and as he took the vacant seat by Jacqueline, said gayly, —

"Now you'll be friends again, if your brother is, won't you?"

Jacqueline smiled.

"When was I your enemy?"

"Oh, well, you couldn't have felt *very* kindly towards me last night."

"But I did."

"You did?"

"Certainly."

Bert had passed around to the side piazza, and was romping with Mrs. Chapman's children, and the baby, whose shouts and laughter almost drowned the voices of these two.

"But you don't dare tell me you wasn't angry and — and disgusted?"

"Disgusted? yes, a little, and very, very sorry, but not angry. I'll tell you what *would* make me angry — if you should do it again." Jacqueline's eyes flashed with something of their old fire.

"Oh, I won't, you may be certain. I never would have talked so, anyhow, if I hadn't been a little off."

"I wasn't thinking about the *talking*," observed Jacqueline.

"You weren't? Why, what in creation were you thinking of?"

"The drinking."

"Oh—h."

"Certainly. One doesn't mind the ravings of a sick person; the thing is, to find out what makes nim sick, and, if possible, to remove the cause."

"H—m — 'tis, eh?"

"Of course. Now you know what makes you sick, and disagreeable, and — forgive me — ugly, of course you will avoid the cause, or — we'll have a right to be angry and disgusted."

He laughed uncomfortably.

"Really, you're quite a lawyer, Miss Jacqueline, but I think I can show you that a man may take his wine and yet keep himself in hand too."

"I don't want you to show me that," said Jacqueline, with one of her sudden, sweet, radiant smiles. "I'd a great deal rather you'd show me a man may do entirely without what he has found to be his worst enemy."

Arthur whistled a prolonged note; though the smile had its effect.

"Really, Miss Amory," he remonstrated, "aren't you a little bit — stiff? Surely, among our kind of people a little champagne-drinking, now and then, isn't a crime, is it?"

"It leads to it."

"Oh, pshaw, Miss Jacqueline! that's talk! Who did you, or I, ever know that was led to crime by drink?"

"*My father.*" The words were low and intense. "He broke my mother's heart, and died himself — a criminal!"

"Miss Jacqueline!"

"It is true! And yet they were of the favored class you and I belong to, to-day; rich and educated, — until dragged down by drink."

Arthur shuddered.

"I couldn't ever get down to that!"

"How do you know? Could you help being ungentlemanly yesterday? How can you tell what you will do next time? I tell you, Arthur Phelps, *it isn't safe!*" and she left him abruptly to ponder her words as he might.

Then, joining the merry group on the side piazza, she was greeted by Ted with a rapturous "Jetty!" — his nearest approach to Jaca — "Oh, Jetty, tome and see 'oor Teddy."

"I guess I will come and see my Teddy!" and she caught the little fellow up in her arms, covering him with kisses.

For she and the little man were the best of friends, the devotion he had formerly given to gay, handsome Mrs. Willey being now quite transferred to Jacqueline. He was a fine child — brave, sturdy, and faithful to his friends, with a heart much too big for his little body; and Jacqueline's rare sweetness, just dashed with a spice of fun, seemed to quite fascinate him. He liked Bessie very much, too, but no one could quite woo him from his "Jetty's" side, and she often took him with them on their drives, until their

devotion had become the sport of the house, and he was often called "Miss Jacqueline's Ted."

That afternoon Bessie, having found an interesting book, was disinclined for talk, or rambling, so Jacqueline, who always enjoyed her own company, started for her favorite walk through the pines, beside Glen Ellis river; where, having brought her portfolio for either sketching or writing, as she should see fit, she disposed of herself comfortably in a sort of natural arm-chair, formed of the rocky bowlders which the long action of the once wide and rapid torrent has worn into deep hollows, and angular projections. Now the slender stream, except after a storm, does not half cover these, but splashes along, in a succession of fairy-like falls, through the center, only.

As she lay back, idly dreaming, and deeming herself well hidden in her cave-like retreat, she could occasionally catch glimpses of some gay coach-load flashing by, on the high road beyond the trees, or hear the murmur of voices above that of the falls, as groups of tourists came and went, leaping from bowlder to bowlder, along the bed of the stream, to disappear at length up the high bank, among the trees.

Finally, a familiar voice exclaimed just above her head. She heard the rustling of branches, and the next minute Mr. Webber swung himself down from the

steep bank above, to the next bowlder, and, seating himself upon it, exclaimed, with a gayety she had never seen in him before, —

"Good-afternoon, Miss Amory!"

She glanced up, surprised at his happy face and light laugh.

"Ah, Mr. Webber, how did you ever know I was here?"

"This betrayed you."

He pointed to her portfolio — a very handsome one, of alligator-skin, with silver corners and clasps — one of her grandmother's last gifts — which had become familiar to him from seeing Jacqueline so often use it, and which had been laid carelessly upon the bowlder beside her.

"Sure enough! I thought I was well hidden from all the world; but I forgive you!" laughing, as she saw his face begin to wear a doubtful look.

"Thank you. I won't disturb you long, but I must tell you, Miss Amory, that the battle is over, and — I keep my place!"

"You do? Good! Please tell me all about it."

"Just what I'm longing to do! Well, I waited till Arthur came upstairs for his usual after-dinner snooze, which he has been in the habit of beginning, by taking what he calls his 'slumber-sip,' a pretty tough sip, too, Miss Amory; namely, a big glass of

egg-nog which I have always prepared for him, keeping the materials in our closet. It was on this order that I prepared to take my stand; but, to my astonishment, I had no stand to take, apparently, for he only drew off his shoes, and, throwing himself back on the bed, said, rather crossly, —

"'Shut those blinds, Webber! — Well, what are you staring at?' for, in my astonishment, I hadn't moved.

"'Don't you — do you?' I began; for I felt I must make my fight, and how could I if he wouldn't give me any cause?

"'Well,' he cried, still more crossly, 'why don't you do what I ask? You look as if you'd like to say you *won't* do it!'

"This gave me an opening.

"'No,' I said, hastening to close the blinds, 'I'm glad to do any thing of this kind, but there was something I should have refused to do.'

"'There was, eh? And what, I'd like to know?'

"'To mix your egg-nog.'

"'Oh — in—deed!' He drawled out the words in his hatefulest way. 'And what did you expect *me* to do then?'

"'To discharge me!' I answered promptly.

"'You did?' He raised himself on his elbows to look at me more closely in his surprise.

"'And what would you have done about college, next winter?' For he knows all about my ambitions, Miss Amory; I told him once, in a moment of confidence, and I sometimes think he has felt that it gave him the whip-hand of me ever since. So I said promptly, 'I would give it up till next year.'

"'You would? and just for an idea?' he asked again, earnestly.

"'I certainly would — for an idea, if you like to call it so; at any rate, to keep from helping you down hill, Arthur Phelps. You can go fast enough without me!'

"He lay back at that, and was still a long time. I waited nervously, and finally burst out with, 'Well?'

"'Well, what?' His voice had a queer sound.

"'Why don't you tell me to go?'

"'Because' — and there was something in his voice, now, that I've never heard before — such a fine, manly ring! — 'Because I'd be a brute if I did! Because, Mark Webber, you're a good fellow, and I like you; and, what's more, *I wouldn't take the wretched stuff if you should mix it!*'

"Well, I *was* surprised, but I asked: 'Will you shake hands on it, Arthur?' And we did, like brothers. Then we had a talk, which I don't care to repeat, even to you, Miss Amory; but there's one thing certain, — I haven't lost my place, but I have gained a

friend. Arthur and I'll never be as we have been again."

"Oh, I'm so glad! I'm *so* glad! I was sure there was something in that boy! I declare, I shall always like him for acting so well!" and Jacqueline was lifted quite out of herself by her joy and delight in this happy change, but without one thought of self-gratulation that she had brought it about.

CHAPTER XX.

WEBBER'S FIRST PATIENT.

After this, things went very happily for our young friends. The Alden boys were gone, and a very devoted young married couple had taken their room, but Miss Ransome still remained, and had grown very fond of the girls.

With our trio, herself, Webber, and Arthur, the six were just enough to fill a wide-seated double buckboard, or an ordinary three-seated country wagon; so they kept together almost constantly, rather ignoring the rest of the household, and had some drives, picnics, and rambles, that would be a sweet memory in all their after life.

Miss Ransome was not given to chattering of her private affairs, so they learned little more of her than that she and her brother lived with a widowed mother in Maine, and that she took care of herself by teaching drawing in the public schools.

They saw, too, that she was an indefatigable worker, and seldom went anywhere without her sketch-book, but did not know that she secretly cherished the

wish and expectation of going to Europe, for study, at some future day.

She came of an old, aristocratic family, now much reduced in pocket, and was herself refined to the very finger-tips, but too noble and proud to look to wealthy relatives for her support. The stand she had thus taken, rather against their wishes, gave her an air of decision and independence that went well with her short, curling locks, her bright gray eyes, her erect figure, and rich voice.

She was evidently a girl with a purpose, and this lifted her far above the usual gay society belle, with little to think of but her new dresses, and nothing to look forward to beyond the next ball.

She and Bessie fraternized wonderfully well, and Jacqueline also liked her thoroughly, as indeed did all of them; but Mark Webber, with his rather yielding nature, looked upon her as a new revelation of bright, self-reliant young womanhood, and showed her a chivalrous admiration that he did not attempt to conceal.

It was in the fourth week of their stay, and they had planned a ten-mile tramp to Fairy Cascade, with lunch at a farm-house near by. Jacqueline, always prompt, was ready and waiting, with her alpenstock, upon the piazza, which just then happened to be otherwise quite deserted, when Teddy came around

the house dragging a pasteboard cart with spool-wheels, which held one much-bedraggled doll as a passenger.

"Ho, Teddy, my man, whither away?" called Jacqueline.

The little fellow stopped and looked around.

"What 'oo say?" he asked, not comprehending mediæval English.

"Where are you going with your baby?"

"I'se tatin' Sally to wide," was his dignified response, and he continued his walk, Jacqueline tenderly smiling as she watched him down the walk and through the front gate.

He had scarcely stepped outside it seemed, — though on these narrow roads, minus side-walks, it takes but a step or two to reach the middle, — when, with a rush and clatter, a great, swaying coach with six prancing horses came dashing around the curve, aimed for the hotel. It was all like a vision to Jacqueline, — her quick, terrified cry, and rushing run down the path; the shouts of the people on the coach-roof; the driver's frantic efforts to pull up his prancing horses; the child's shrill scream, — then a little figure seemed to be tossed to her very feet, just as she had reached the gate.

Unconsciously groaning with horror, she stooped and raised the limp little form in her arms.

"Oh, his mother, his mother! his poor, poor, mother!" was all she could say; as, quite unmindful of the confusion among the passengers, the quick questions, and hurrying figures about her, she fairly ran with him towards the house.

The commotion and cries had aroused them there, and Mrs. Pack met her with a white, scared face, just without the door; while heads were thrust out from upper windows with anxious exclamations, soon to be withdrawn, as their owners rushed down-stairs to see what it all meant; but the mother, busy with her work at the back of the house, heard and saw nothing.

"Dear, dear!" cried Mrs. Pack nervously, "is he killed? Oh, what shall we do? We must get a doctor at once."

Miss Ransome's voice, prompt and decided, broke in upon the confusion of tongues, asking, exclaiming, and advising, all at once.

"I'll bring Mr. Webber, he is a medical student," and before the child was fairly laid on the stiff parlor sofa, softened with a comfortable, she was back with that young man in tow.

Meanwhile Mrs. Pack had cried, in an agony,—

"Who'll tell his mother? I *never* can. Oh, Miss Randall, won't you?"

Bessie drew back.

"Come, Bessie," said Theo Ransome imperatively, and together they went on their dreaded errand, while Jacqueline, almost dazed, now stood close by and watched Mr. Webber's careful examination.

"He is not dead!" he exclaimed, just in time to reach the distracted mother's ears, as she hurried in ghastly pale, then he added, "His leg is broken, and the fall has knocked him senseless; I hope that's the worst."

"One of the horses must have kicked him," exclaimed a man's excited voice; "he wasn't run over, I know."

"He's coming to," said Webber, "quick! somebody before he can feel pain; help me to set this leg."

The poor young mother, with a cry, fled from the room; but Theo Ransome stepped forward at once, and Jacqueline never moved from her post.

"That's right, you two brave girls! Hold him so; now steady."

The sharp click of the reunited bone went through Jacqueline like an electric shock, and the child's eyes opened with a faint cry.

"Mamma," he said, then seeing who was by him, "Jetty!"

"Yes, dear, mamma's right here," for hearing the cry, the mother had come again to his side.

"Oh, Teddy, mamma's love," she said brokenly, bending over him.

"What mates 'oo try? Ow! My led hu'ts!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, but Teddy's going to be a man, and let me do it up nicely," said Webber in a soothing voice, holding it tight between his hands, while he directed Bert to make the splints, and in a short time it was splintered and bandaged, in a neat, workmanlike manner.

"There, that's better; now don't cry, my brave boy. You'll have to lie still awhile. Ah!"

The exclamation was caused by seeing the child's eyes slowly roll backwards in his head, while a spasm shook his limbs; he knew, now, there must have been injury to the head, or spine, as well.

The mother burst into a succession of shrill cries,—

"Oh, he's dying! he's dying! My God help me!"

"Hush!" said Webber, almost sternly, "it's only a spasm!" and, giving his directions, right and left, he soon had the child undressed, and in bed, where they did every thing possible to alleviate his sufferings.

There was little thought for any thing but the baby, the rest of that day. An older practitioner was found at the hotel who complimented Webber's handling of the case, and assisted him in his more

delicate examination of the spine, where the injury was found to be.

"What do you think," whispered Webber, "will he ever walk again?"

"We can't tell; he is young and healthy, he may outgrow it, but he will need constant and unremitting care for years."

"His poor mother!" groaned Webber, "she hasn't a cent in the world, except her daily wages."

"Bad! bad!" said the doctor. "Such things make one almost doubt in Providence, till we look deeper, and see what comes of them; there's one thing,— I'll let those passengers know!"

He did so, with the result that a generous purse was made up among them, for the distressed mother.

"And what's your fee, doctor?" asked an elderly gentleman who had hitherto said little, though his keen dark eyes seemed to take in every thing.

"Oh, I'm off on a vacation, now, and can afford to give my services," he said, laughingly. "Besides, there's very little I can do. This young Webber is handling the case nicely."

"He is some tourist stopping here?"

"Well, no; I imagine, from what I saw and heard, he attends upon one of the young gentlemen — that boy with a slight limp."

"Ah, yes! he may need a fee?"

"Very likely! very likely. He doesn't look any too well off."

"All right; I'll see to that!" and the gentleman moved away.

But next day, to Webber's intense and delighted astonishment, he received, in the morning's mail, an envelope containing a check for fifty dollars, and the following note: —

MARK WEBBER, M. D. (To be.)

Dear Sir, — Inclosed, please find fee of fifty dollars in consideration of valuable services rendered the young child lately injured.

Yours sincerely,

JONAS HAPGOOD.

BOSTON.

With sparkling eyes he came towards the little group, who sat in subdued talk upon the piazza, and, holding up the check, exclaimed, —

"Hear this!" reading the note.

When he reached the name at the end, Theo gave a cry of wonder.

"It's my uncle! my mother's uncle! I haven't seen him since I was too small to remember, but Jonas Hapgood, of Boston, is certainly the uncle who sends mother a regular remittance every six months, and wanted — " she suddenly checked herself, for, in her surprise she had told more than she meant to; then, seeing their expectant looks, added, doggedly, —

"Well, I might as well finish! Wanted to educate me, but I wouldn't let him! It's just like him to do this generous thing; but he is very odd. I should not know him, if I should meet him, for he never would have his picture taken, and we haven't met since I was a mere baby. I'll go right over and call on him. Who'll go with me?"

"I!" said Webber.

"No, you mustn't! I tell you, he's the oddest man living, and he'll hate you forever, if you thank him! Come, Jacqueline and Bessie."

So the three girls, who had now dropped all ceremony with each other, went over to the hotel, and asked to see Mr. Hapgood.

Being shown into the parlor, the old gentleman soon entered. He was tall and straight, with keen eyes, under dark, bushy brows, and long, silky-fine, perfectly white hair.

He looked at them curiously, and Theo rose.

"Mr. Hapgood — Uncle Jonas — I'm your niece, Theodora Ransome."

"You are! You don't say so! Well, well!" and he clasped her hand cordially, looking her over with keen intentness.

"What brought you to the mountains? Are you stopping at this house? Where's your mother? Who are these young ladies?"

She answered with military brevity, and a mirthful flash of her gray eyes, as keen, and, indeed, much like his own.

"Rest, and a chance to sketch. No. In Portland. And these young ladies are my friends at the boarding-house, — Bessie Randall, and Jacqueline Amory."

"Good," he chuckled, "you're a Hapgood clear through. Your mother's own girl. Well, well, young ladies, I'm happy and proud to make your acquaintance," giving a kindly hand to each.

"And so" — going back to Theo — "you're the independent young maiden who flung my money in my face, and wrote me a letter that looked like copper-plate, and read like a challenge — are you?" And he held her with his sharp eyes, evidently delighting himself in this study of the girl.

She drew herself up a little.

"You're wrong, uncle. I appreciated your kindness thoroughly; but sir, you made your way alone in the world, and you're proud of it. I'm a Hapgood, too!"

"So you are. Bless your bonny eyes, so you are. I'm glad to know you better, my child," placing his hand kindly on her head, "but tell me, how did you know who I was? I shouldn't ever have recognized you for the baby I once saw, and you certainly couldn't

remember me — by the way, aren't you those plucky girls who helped the young doctor with the baby, yesterday ? "

"We were there, uncle, but did not do much; but we found you out through Mr. Webber. He showed us your letter."

"Oh, he did, did he? The rascal! What did he do that for ? "

"I imagine because he was too pleased to keep it to himself," laughed Bessie.

"Pleased, was he ? What kind of a fellow is he, anyhow ? "

"Splendid ! "

"A fine fellow ? "

"As good as gold ! "

The three expressions came simultaneously from Bessie, Jacqueline, and Theo.

"Ha, ha ! a regular beau, I see ! "

"Not a bit of it," indignantly, as one voice.

"Ain't, eh ? Well, what is he ? Rich or poor, drone or worker, dude or man ? "

"Poor — worker — man ! " they cried enthusiastically.

"Ha, ha ! Very fine. Well, I must see more of this paragon. By the way," — he snatched out a gold time-piece of immense size, and hurriedly consulted it, — "I ordered my luggage sent by the 4:10 train,

but I've changed my mind. I'll stay over a day or two. Here, porter," catching sight of one just passing the open door, his arms full of luggage, "just put those two Russia leather valises back in No. 550. I'm not going to-day," and he was off in lively conversation with the girls again.

His day stretched into a week, which in spite of their sadness over poor little Teddy, he made a very delightful one; for with all his white hair, Jonas Hapgood was but a boy at heart, and felt that no society could be more charming than that of these wide-awake, well-bred young people. As for them, they one and all took him right into their hearts, and made him so welcome that he put off his going from day to day, till he declared amid his laughter, which rang out clear and honest as a silver bell, that he had dropped into second childhood, and hadn't sense enough left to know his own mind.

Yet no one neglected Teddy, and the kind attentions of these young people in staying by his side, soon permitted his mother to resume her labors as cook. The child's broken leg healed rapidly, but there were times when he suffered paroxysms of pain from his other injury. Jacqueline thought about him a great deal, and these thoughts finally crystallized into a long letter written to her grandmother out of the fullness of her heart, which we will give entire.

"My Dearest Grandma, — Teddy is a little more easy now, and his broken leg is nearly well; but oh, isn't it sad ?—he will not walk for years, and perhaps never, and he such a bright, fine, handsome boy! It makes the tears come whenever I think of it.

It would be bad enough if his mother were a rich woman, but being so poor, and obliged to take care of herself and him, by working in other people's houses, how *is* she to manage ?

Very few would be willing to have a crippled child in the house; and, then, he needs more time and care than she could give him.

I have talked with her when sitting here by Ted, and she is in perfect despair over their future.

Now, grandma dear, I tell you all this for a purpose, for even before Teddy's accident I had an idea in my mind (and heart, too), which this only makes me feel the more anxious to carry out. You know how much I enjoyed that few days I was in hospital, for I told you about it once; and I saw people had to be turned away from there when just beginning to be convalescent, to make room for those who needed care more than they. Now think, grandma, what it would be to a child still half sick, and weak, and languid, to be sent from hospital to some lovely spot where the air was pure, and there were plenty of flowers, and delightful views from the windows, and where they could stay till perfectly well and strong.

And, grandma, you know what I said about using dear Aunt Patty's money to help others. Now, this is my idea: To turn the cottage into a little — just a *little* — hospital for convalescent children, where they could come to get thoroughly well again. Now, couldn't we do this, using the interest on Aunt Patty's money, to take care of them ? and, oh! couldn't little Teddy be our first patient ?

Then his mother might get work somewhere near, where she could see him often, and feel that her boy was looked after. If

the Treats would agree to take him, I know they would be good to him; and I believe they will, if I ask them. That would be a beginning, and, in time, we might find somebody else, maybe, and so it would go on.

Please, dear grandma, think this over, and get Mr. Randall to consent, also!

We are having such a nice time with Theo's uncle, Mr. Hapgood! He's the youngest, jolliest, and best old gentleman I ever saw. Bert and Bessie are off with him and Theo on a double-buckboard ride, but I stayed home to write this.

Please don't let my idea go to waste! Love to Uncle George and Aunt Arl from

Your own, JACQUELINE.

A few days later came a postal from George, with this message: —

"Yours received, and under consideration. Wouldn't wonder if your Idea became a Fact! Mother says, write to the Treats, and see what they'll say. Get prices for board, etc., for, you know, business method is the backbone of charity!

Yours, G."

Before Jacqueline received Mrs. Treat's reply to the letter she sent off that very day, came a long, loving one from her grandmother, which gave the permission she desired, and much good counsel. One thing she said is worth remembering: —

"I am glad, my dear child, that you feel you are but the steward of what means you have, and should devote all to God's service; but remember this, also, — you have no more right to corrupt others with your riches than to be corrupted by them yourself.

And, when you help others where they should help themselves, you do them real injury, for you take from them the bread of independence, which is the only bread a true man, or woman, should eat! Help Teddy's mother in her sacred charge, but do not take it entirely from her. Let her pay from her wages every week, *something*, even if but a few cents, that she may still feel she has some care of her boy."

It was a happy day for Jacqueline when the matter was finally settled by the Treats' agreement, and Mr. Randall's consent (from California) as guardian.

She hastened to tell the anxious mother her plan, and was quite overwhelmed by her gratitude.

"It is the best thing that ever happened to me!" she said. "I couldn't get work here, anyhow, after the season is over; and I know, in a place like yours, near a large city, I will be pretty certain to find it. As for poor little Teddy, you've been a perfect angel to him, Miss Amory, and that's a fact! I never saw such kind people as you all are, any way. And this money the gentleman raised for me, will pay all our expenses going there, and something to spare, won't it?"

"Yes, indeed, but —"

"What's all this?" cried Webber, entering the room where Ted lay with wide-open eyes, listening to their talk, his poor, little, white face in striking contrast to that of the sturdy boy we first saw.

"Jetty's a nangel;" he remarked, solemnly, while his mother added, —

"O sir! it's some more of Miss Amory's goodness!" and she proceeded, most volubly, to pour out the whole plan.

"Why, Miss Jacqueline, is this true?" asked Webber with animation, turning to her.

Jacqueline nodded.

"Give me your hand! It has been the wish of my heart to be able to do something of that kind, one day, but I fear I never can. I'll tell you, though, when you want a resident physician, send for me."

"I will," laughed Jacqueline, carelessly, little thinking how these words would some day be verified.

When the plan was known to the household (for the happy mother couldn't keep still, and Webber wouldn't!) there was a sudden accession of interest in little Ted again; while Jacqueline found herself pointed out as his benefactress, until she almost dreaded to go over to the hotel, because of the sensation she created.

"Such a little thing to make a fuss about!" she said to Bessie, who, with an arch smile, aptly quoted Shakespeare's beautiful lines, —

> "'How far this little candle throws its beams, —
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world.'"

CHAPTER XXI.

JACQUELINE'S HOBBY.

It was a fortnight later when our young friends took the train for home.

There had been many changes in the household. Theo, accompanied by her uncle, had gone home three days before, while Mrs. Willey's and the Chicago teachers' rooms were occupied by other guests; so that, of the original family, there would be left only Mrs. Chapman and her children, as Arthur and Webber were to take the same train with our friends. They made quite a company, for, besides the five young people, there was Katie Green, the cook, with her little Teddy. His leg was quite well now, and he could move about some in bed, and sit comfortably in a chair or a person's arms, but any attempt to place him on his feet brought forth shrill cries of suffering; yet he bore the confinement bravely, and was so patient and good that they could not do enough for him. A place had been secured for his mother at the Talbots', who were needing a cook, so she need not lose any time.

They had a quiet, uneventful journey, parting regretfully from Arthur and Webber, who agreed to keep up a correspondence with Bert, and arrived in the late afternoon at the dear home station. Ike was there with the carriage, well stocked with wraps and pillows for the sick boy, while Jim's welcoming grin was a sight to see.

A surprise awaited Bessie, for her father stood also on the platform to receive her, having unexpectedly arrived the day before.

"So this is the beginning of the Amory Hospital for Convalescent Children!" he cried merrily, after greetings were exchanged, as he gently held the little fellow till his mother had taken her seat in the carriage opposite Bert and Jacqueline.

The baby smiled up in his face, for Teddy had borne the journey bravely; and with unwonted emotion Mr. Randall pressed a light kiss on his forehead before laying him tenderly in his mother's arms.

Then he and Bessie whirled away in the phaeton, with promises to see them again soon; while, at Jacqueline's request, Ike drove at once to the cottage, for, though so anxious to meet the dear ones at home, they must first see that Ted was comfortable. Mrs. Treat met them at the door.

"And this is Teddy?" she said gently, as she welcomed them in; "the little darling! We've got

a dear little bed your grandmother sent, Miss Amory, in the small room off mine, and I've fixed the lounge in the parlor to lay him on now."

While they took off his things, she brought in a bowl of nice bread and milk, which the little fellow ate greedily; then they left him with his mother, who was to stay there till morning.

"Now, Ike, drive like Jehu!" cried Bert with a caper, as they sprang into the carriage, and in three minutes they were dashing grandly up the broad drive of the dear old home.

Arlene stood waiting on the front steps, looking *so* lovely in her light summer dress, and just within the door-way was their beautiful, beloved grandmother. It was a rapturous moment, and Jacqueline was almost frightened to feel the tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Why, I'm crying!" she exclaimed, so *naïvely* that every body laughed, and then wiped away their own tears, finding this joy had been too much for them also.

Then Mrs. Rutter and the servants appeared, hurrying to give their welcome, till the pleasure of it all made Jacqueline pale with emotion.

"Oh," she sobbed, "it is even better than my first coming. Can I ever leave such a lovely home again?"

"There, there! the child is quite worn out. Jule, go with Miss Jacqueline to her room, and help her into a loose, fresh wrapper. Now, run along, dear; we're all substantial, and won't vanish while you're gone," said her grandmother laughingly, as she waved her away.

Bert had explored every old nook and cranny before she reappeared, refreshed by a bath and a charming, cool toilet, to be greeted by George, who had just come from the train. Supper was scarcely over when Mr. Randall and Bessie came in.

"O Jaca!" she cried, after she had given them all a hearty greeting around, "I do miss you so, even this soon."

"Well, well, that's a compliment to your old father," cried Mr. Randall, with pretended displeasure.

"No, papa, she can't take your place," leaning fondly against his chair, "nobody can do that; but think of poor me when you get buried in those books, and the house is so still I long to hear even the squeak of a mouse, and am tempted to go out into the kitchen where there's some life and fun, as I used to when I was little."

Her lugubrious face made them all laugh, but her father said thoughtfully, —

"It *is* lonesome for you, Queenie. Jacqueline, you must give us all the time you can."

"Indeed," put in Bert, "there ought to be several copies of Jaca, for Ted will doubtless be howling for her at the cottage too; however, we've got the one authentic volume, and we mean to keep it."

"Bound in calf, Bert?" she laughed.

"No, bound in muslin, you minx," touching her thin gown. "Don't you insinuate that my sister has any thing of the calf about her, Miss Amory. I won't stand it."

Then Jacqueline's new plan was thoroughly discussed, amid some good-natured teasing from Mr. Randall.

"But how are you to get hold of these children for your hospital, Jacqueline?" he asked, "for if I understand you rightly, they must be a little more than ill and less than well, to make a bad paraphrase on Shakespeare."

"Dear me, I should think so," laughed Bessie.

"I'm going to keep looking among the poor here in town, and I expect if my friends hear of anybody, they'll let me know. I'm going to talk with the Treats, and see if they will take any more though. I hope they will, for I like their ways. What I want is to take in all that the interest money will provide for, and have somebody who would be willing to care for them."

"But of course Mrs. Treat couldn't do much with-

out help," said Mrs. Leavenworth. "By the way, Hannah was here, the other day, to see if I couldn't tell her of a place for general housework; perhaps this would be just the thing."

"Just!" said Jacqueline, "Hannah's so faithful and kind. We must see about it, grandma; but Mr. Randall, you didn't give our institution its right name this afternoon."

"I didn't? And what, pray, may it be, my lady?"

"The Amory-Barnes Hospital! Wouldn't that be better?"

"I'd abbreviate it to the A — B —" said Bert wickedly, "a — b, ab — so appropriate to its infantile character."

Bert so seldom chaffed his sister that she flushed furiously at this, and George hastened to the rescue.

"It is a kind thought, Jacqueline, to associate her name with your own."

"And Jaca, my love, you can't expect to ride a hobby and not be guyed a little, now and then," put in Bert, in so wheedling a tone that she couldn't but be mollified.

And so the conversation ran lightly along, as it will after a happy home-coming, taking in the home scenes and neighbors, and glancing off to the experiences of the journey, until every body was surprised to find it almost midnight.

"Scandalous," laughed Mrs. Leavenworth, as the Randalls rose with exclamations of dismay, "our young travelers won't be worth any thing to-morrow."

"Well, there'll be the memory of to-night, anyhow," said Bessie. "Yah—ah—h!" with a long yawn, "how sleepy I am!" and with last words and laughter they finally disappeared in the midnight shadows.

They did sleep late next day, but eleven o'clock found Jacqueline at the cottage, inquiring for Ted.

"Yes, he rested well," said Mrs. Treat, in response to her eager queries, "and ate a good breakfast. I do believe he is learning to like me, too, for he didn't make the least fuss when his mother went away."

"It's fortunate he became so used to strangers, and was so little with his mother; he won't miss her so much now," said Jacqueline, too low for him to hear. "Well, Teddy, my boy, how are you to-day? Do you like it here?"

"It's pitty," he answered, his big eyes on the greenhouse, whose doors were thrown back. "And Ted lites dis chair."

It was a leather "sleepy hollow," well stocked with pillows, amid which he sat, surrounded by the toys and bright picture-books Mrs. Leavenworth had thoughtfully provided before his arrival.

"That's right, my good boy!"

"And Ted lites her!" pointing to Mrs. Treat. "Her's dot dood bed-e-mik!" which, being interpreted, meant "bread-and-milk."

Jacqueline laughed, and kissed his sweet lips, well pleased, while Mrs. Treat looked on, smilingly.

"Poor baby!" she said. "I wish we had another child to keep him company. It's lonesome for him."

"*Would* you take another one, Mrs. Treat? Now, let me tell you all my plan!" and so long and interesting was their talk, that John came very near losing his dinner in consequence!

But something in enthusiasm is very catching, and Jacqueline's soon fired a like spirit in good Mary Treat, until it was evidently only John who would interfere at all. However, as what Mary said was generally the determining word, there was little fear that he would stand out against the two whom he thought most of among womankind!

To be sure he poohed, and pished, as men will, but a few days later came home with a grave face.

"Mary," he said, "are you in earnest about taking in more children?"

"Yes," she answered. "Children don't annoy me as they do most people; and Miss Amory pays well. When Hannah comes, I sha'n't have any thing to do,

hardly, and I'm sure another child, if of the right kind, would be great company for little Ted."

"Well, I think I know just the one."

"You do; and who is it?"

"Well, it's a little girl of Howe's — one of our men at the mills. She had typhoid fever six weeks ago, and don't seem to get up strong at all, and her little white face fairly haunts me! I was there to-day. Only three rooms, and six children in them, and she lying back on the patched old lounge, with her fingers in her ears to keep out the noise they were making! I felt like picking her up, and running off with her, poor little thing! Howe's industrious and steady, after a fashion, but he's one of the kind that never gets ahead, and that little Maggie's the flower of the flock. What do you think? Would Miss Amory have her?"

"Indeed she would! I'll tell her this very afternoon!" which she did, with the result that, before the next night, an amazed little Maggie lay on the soft, wide lounge in the shaded parlor, her face sweet with contentment, and a little laugh bubbling up now and then at Ted's odd talk as he sat close by in the big chair, while kind Mary Treat sewed contentedly within arms-reach.

The change really made things easier for Mrs. Treat after a day or two. Rest, quiet, and wholesome

food were all that Maggie needed to make her comfortable and happy; and happy, comfortable children are nearly always good!

Each child amused the other, for Maggie, being nearly seven, was too old to quarrel with a baby; but she could read his books to him, cut out horses and cows of impossible anatomy, build block houses, and play quiet little games, which kept him occupied by the hour.

"It works well, doesn't it?" asked Jacqueline, with a pride-ful air, as she and Bessie came in, one day, bringing some little cakes and toys for the children.

"It seems to," said Mary Treat, in her hearty way. "I begin to feel very proud of my family! The only thing is, I shall get to loving them so I won't want to give them up!" and the tears started to her eyes.

"Well, we won't hurry them away," said Jacqueline comfortably; "so long as our Board of Managers consists only of grandma and Mr. Randall, I don't think we need worry!"

"Yes, you'll manage them, I'll warrant!" cried Bessie, merrily. "How do you make every body do exactly as you like, witch?"

"Oh, I've a touchstone!" she laughed.

"And what is it?" urged Bessie.

Mary Treat's eyes were shining.

"I know," she said softly; "it's love, Miss Bessie; that's what it is!"

"You've hit it!" was the answer, but Jacqueline made haste to turn the conversation to matters less personal; for she had spoken carelessly, without a thought of such an interpretation.

When Jacqueline reached home, that day, she found a big, business-like letter laid conspicuously upon the hall table, where the address would stare her in the face.

"Miss Jacqueline Amory," she read. "Who on earth is that from?" and, tearing it open, soon found the signature to be that of Jonas Hapgood.

It was a characteristic note, in which he informed her that, as he was to pass through soon on his way to the city, he should do himself the pleasure of calling upon Mrs. Leavenworth and herself, with their permission.

She glanced quickly at the date.

"He says next Friday; why, *this* is Friday. Grandma! grandma!" and, rushing into the library, she had soon told her news.

"Very well, my dear; tell Jule to come and help me arrange my dress a little. It can't be long, now, before he will be here" — and, indeed, she was scarcely seated again, after her toilet, when the bell rang, and a moment later the gentleman was ushered in.

Jacqueline, after a cordial welcome, introduced him to her grandmother, watching a little anxiously to see what effect they produced upon each other; but she need not have feared.

He was charmed with the beautiful old lady, and she, in turn, quite unbent from her dignity before his hearty smile, and keen, kindly eyes.

They insisted upon keeping him to tea, though he said he had rooms at the hotel for the night, upon which Mrs. Leavenworth quietly dispatched Jim for his luggage, and told Jule to put the green room in order. Then she told her guest of the arrangements she had made, adding in her courtly manner, —

"The old Leavenworth house can not let such an honor and pleasure go by, Mr. Hapgood," which utterly disarmed any objections he might have made.

As they strolled out upon the piazza, after tea, he turned to Jacqueline, suddenly, and said, —

"But I haven't seen the Hospital, yet, Madame Manageress; when are you going to show me that?"

"Now, if you like," said Jacqueline, eagerly (for, as Bert said, this was her hobby), and running for her hat and his, she soon rejoined him.

Just then Bert came around the house, pushing his bicycle to the drive.

"I'm going over for Bessie," he said; "she'll never

forgive us, if we let Mr. Hapgood go without her seeing him — you're not going away ? "

"Only for a short time — we'll be home soon — we're — we're going for a walk."

"Oh, ho ! the A. B. is it ? Ha, ha !" And his teasing laugh floated back to them as he whirled down the drive.

"What does he mean by that ? " asked Mr. Hapgood, with a twinkle in his own eyes.

Jacqueline's face was a pretty mixture of blushes, laughter, and annoyance, as she answered, —

"Oh, it's his teasing; he calls it my hobby, and says I ride it to death. 'A. B.' are the initials of the two names I thought I'd like to give it — Amory-Barnes."

"Amory — yes, that's your own — but Barnes, where in the world did you get that ? "

"From the lady who left me the property."

"Indeed ! an aunt, or cousin, perhaps ? "

"I called her aunt, but she was really no relation; only a true, good friend — almost a mother — dear, dear Aunt Patty ! "

Her eyes were full of tears, so she did not notice a queer look in his face, but his next question rather surprised her.

"Was she still Patty Barnes when she died ? "

"Yes, sir, she never married. Do you like long

stories, Mr. Hapgood? Would you like to hear mine?"

"Nothing better."

"Then we'll go around this way, and make our walk a little longer;" and, turning from the short cut she had first taken, through a part of the Leavenworth grounds, back to the street, she began her story, her companion listening with an interest that was not assumed.

It was an unusual thing for Jacqueline thus to go into her past, and she could never tell what led her to it that evening — perhaps something beyond herself, whose power was not to be resisted. At any rate, she did tell it, and that so well that, more than once, Mr. Hapgood's hand went up to wipe away the tears — though she was without a thought of the great results which were to flow from it.

When she finished, he said, gently, "I'm glad to know this, Jacqueline — glad to see you don't let prosperity spoil your nature, as it too often does; and I'm very thankful, too, to learn all these good things about my old friend and playmate — Patty Barnes."

"*Your* friend? Did you know her?"

"Yes, indeed; we were neighbors in a little country village up in the Green Mountains, and many's the time I've drawn Patty's sled up hill for her, when we

boys and girls used to go coasting, winter afternoons! She was a pretty girl, with big, gray eyes and merry ways; every body liked her. Her father moved away when she was about nineteen. I was a poor boy then, working on a farm, and her father went to the city and made money. I lost sight of her, but I don't doubt this Patty Barnes you tell me of is the same sweet-natured girl I knew then. Her father must have lost his property."

"Yes, sir, I've heard so — and became a hopeless paralytic. Her mother died, too, and Aunt Patty took care of him till *he* died, then she took what little was left and came here, where she bought this cottage, and lived the rest of her life."

As she spoke, she pointed to the pretty, rose-embowered place — for they were now at the gate — and stopping, Mr. Hapgood looked at it long, with an unusual sadness upon his face. Evidently, old memories were stirring in his soul, and Jacqueline, glancing shyly at his grave face, wondered if there had been any hidden romance in Aunt Patty's apparently sunny life, which she had never even suspected.

"A fine place," he said, at length, rousing himself as if from a dream; then his gaze wandered about critically; "yes, a fine place; it has great natural advantages, and these grounds could easily be en-

larged. The houses on each side are neither of them new, I see."

"Oh, no, sir; one is very old, and occupied by old people, too; the other is rented to tenants, who come and go."

They went in, to find Mrs. Treat just preparing to carry Teddy upstairs to bed; but she stopped when she heard his joyous cry of "Jetty!" and made them welcome.

Mr. Hapgood always noticed children, and soon had both Ted and Maggie laughing over his funny remarks, but he managed, meanwhile, to take a good look about him, even getting up for a closer view of the greenhouse.

"It's a pretty place, and well built," he said reflectively, as they left the door, after a short call; then, stopping to turn back and look it all over again, he said, slowly, "I think you are right in feeling that she would be pleased with such a work — she who had the kindest heart in the world! It is the best monument one could raise to her memory. It could be easily enlarged by additions, which would really be an improvement. How many sleeping-rooms are there, now?"

"Four."

"Is that all? Very few for a hospital."

"I know, sir; but so far my hospital is more in my

mind than anywhere else, Mr. Hapgood! The interest of Aunt Patty's money wouldn't support many more children, anyhow. Of course, Teddy's board offsets the rent, but doctors' fees, laundry work, and other extras take quite a sum. Now there's the wheel-chair I mean to get for Teddy, when he's a little larger, and then, — but there's no use thinking of that!"

"Then what, little lady?"

"Oh, I was thinking how I'd like to build a big play-room for rainy days, and have swings, and tricycles, and such things."

"And what does your grandmother say to this? Is she willing to help?"

"Yes, sir, and does, all the time. But I haven't said a word about these things, because I know she has pet charities of her own, and a great many ways to spend her money. This is *my* plan, and I must work it out myself."

"Still, hospitals are nearly always endowed; you wouldn't object to help from friends, would you?"

"Dear me, no," laughed Jacqueline, innocently, "who would?"

Bessie and her father were awaiting them when they returned, and they had a delightful evening together, Mr. Randall and the guest fraternizing at once. Indeed, the next morning, somewhat to Jacque-

line's surprise, Mr. Hapgood asked the way to the Randall house, saying he would like to make a call before he left; and bidding them good-by at least an hour before train time, went over there, Mrs. Leavenworth promising that Jim should take his luggage to the station.

"He is a fine old gentleman!" said she, as the three ladies watched his upright figure out of sight from the piazza, where they sat with their work. "Did you say he had no family, Jacqueline?"

"I believe not, grandma. I know he is a widower, but I think his wife died very soon after they were married — so Theo said. He is rich, and very charitable — would do a great deal more for her, only she's so independent. I wish you knew her, grandma!"

"I hope to before a great while, — in fact, all your particular friends of the mountains. You say Miss Theo teaches drawing in the public schools; don't they have a vacation at Christmas time?"

"I suppose so — certainly."

"Then why not have them here for a regular, old-fashioned Christmas?"

"Oh, grandma! wouldn't that be fun? Do you really mean it? Bert! Bert!" and she went flying down the drive to meet him, and tell the pleasant plan.

A few days later, as Jacqueline entered the cottage gate, she had a glimpse of the children (their number

now increased by two more little girls, who had been "contributed," as Bert said, by George, from the city) at play in the back yard, and following their merry shouts, came upon them grouped about a beautiful little invalid wheeled chair, in which Ted was evidently learning to make his way about. She stopped in perfect astonishment. Certainly, *she* had not ordered that chair; nor, indeed, had she spoken of it at home; but she had little time to think, as Ted had now caught sight of her, and was clamoring for Jetty to "See! see!" while the other children, crowding about her, began to explain its wonders.

Even when Mrs. Treat was asked, she could give but little information.

"It came Saturday afternoon, addressed to the 'Amory-Barnes Hospital, Care of John Treat,'" she said. "But isn't it fine? So nicely cushioned and full of springs; then see, you can raise or lower it to any position, and it moves with a touch. Ted is perfectly delighted, and I could hardly get him out of it last night. See, his cheeks are really rosy with the exercise," and she bent and kissed him tenderly.

A sudden thought flashed through Jacqueline's mind.

"I mentioned it to Mr. Hapgood," she said quickly. "I wonder, could it be? Did you save the wrappings?"

"Yes, I think they're in the wood-shed, yet," and together they hastened to look at them.

"Yes, it's from Boston, and wait — see there," and Jacqueline pointed triumphantly to a small tag, which had evidently dropped among them when they were removed, and which read, "Sold, to Jonas Hapgood." "It *is* from him, how kind he is! I had intended getting one myself, when Ted was older."

"But you see, Miss Amory, this can be lengthened out — I'll show you — and so last him a long time," and together they went back to the garden to admire, expatiate, and exclaim, while the proud Ted showed off to his complete satisfaction.

The arrival of this chair was, however, but a slight sensation to the one that came a little later. When Mr. Randall, bristling with importance and legal terms, came over to the Leavenworth house, he informed them with proper ceremony, that Mr. Jonas Hapgood had placed in his hands, in trust, the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, five thousand of which was to be used in adding to the house and grounds, now known as the Amory-Barnes Hospital, whatever was needed, or should be desired, within certain limits, by its founder and manageress, Miss Jacqueline Amory, the other ten to be invested, and its interest applied to aid in the maintenance and support of this

hospital, in such manner as its Board of Trustees should direct.

"I had a long talk with him before he left," Mr. Randall added, "and learned what his idea was; namely, to buy one adjoining lot, to give more room for grounds and garden, and build on at the south side of the house, a long two-story wing, to form a play-room below, and give more bed-rooms above."

"Oh," said Jacqueline, and could say no more, for both heart and eyes and throat were full.

"Does it suit your ideas, Miss Amory?" bowing with mock ceremony.

"It is too good, too kind! I feel almost as if I had begged it. Oh, how soon can we begin?"

"To-morrow, if you say so, but there are several things I want to speak about first. You should have at least two more trustees. I don't care to have so much responsibility; whom could you suggest?"

"Must they all live here?"

"Not necessarily."

"Could I have Mr. Hapgood, then?"

"Certainly, and very proper too, if he'll consent to serve. Who else?"

"Let me see, why, Uncle George. Couldn't I have him?"

"He'd make an excellent one, I'm sure. Then, there's another thing. It seems to me you had better

try and make some new arrangement with the Treats. They have shown themselves well qualified to manage such a home, and should, when so enlarged, give it their whole attention. A man's time is needed to oversee things, manage the garden and greenhouse, act as steward, etc. Then it would be more economical to keep cows, rather than buy milk as you do now. John is a farmer's son, and would, I think, enjoy such work. You could give them their living, rent, and a moderate salary, and it would really be an excellent thing for them as well as you. Whatever other help was needed, we could attend to. I would advise a basement laundry under this wing, where the washing could be done, and a furnace put in to heat the whole house."

"Oh," said Jacqueline again, with cheeks aflame, and eyes like stars, "and how many children can we have?"

"With reasonable economy, this income, added to the other, should support twelve, at least; I think, at present, I would limit the number to that. As they come and go, you could benefit a good many children in one year."

"But I get so attached to them," sighed Jacqueline. "There's poor little Maggie; I can't bear to send her home."

"Yet there must be method even in charities, my dear. Here is a suggestion: why not let it be

understood that a month is the limit of time a child will be kept, unless the parents would then pay its board? Fix this at so moderate an amount that it will be possible for a poor laboring man to meet it; and if he is the man he ought to be, and sees his child happier and better off than at home, he will be glad to feel that he is still doing his duty as a father, and not depending on charity. Still, if it is to be a *convalescent* hospital, there should be none but sickly children allowed to remain over time."

"No," said Jacqueline, "I suppose not. But Ted — he must stay!"

"Yes, and will come under the rules, as his mother is both willing and able to pay the small weekly stipend agreed upon."

"And Maggie's month won't be up for ten days, yet!" she added, so joyfully as to raise a general laugh.

"I'm afraid it'll be a dreadfully unorthodox hospital!" laughed Bert, who had entered during the consultation. "If the youngsters are pretty and interesting, Jaca 'll be sure to forget when their month is up."

Mr. Randall held out his hand.

"Five dollars fine for slandering this noble institution!" he cried, merrily, then doubled up the fist to shake at the boy.

The latter felt in all his pockets.

"Sort of a money-or-your-life concern, eh? How'll five cents do, for to-day? I'll tell you what, though, Jaca. I'll begin saving to-morrow, and when you get ready to stock your play-room, I'll come to the front like a Dutch uncle!"

"Why, you dear boy! that's the first thing you've promised."

"And probably the last, you little beggar! Come, haven't you had hospital enough for to-day? I want you to get your portfolio and go out sketching with me. I've got the cart outside, and we'll drive to the lake. Come, you've neglected art for charity shamefully of late!"

So the conference broke up, nor would Bert let her even refer to the matter again that afternoon, which was one of their old, charming, lazy rambles here and there, — riding a little, exploring a little, sketching a little, and talking a great deal.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS.

With fall came school for Bessie and Jacqueline, and college for Bert, necessitating a separation they all felt was hard to bear.

Still, Jacqueline was so busy with her own studies, and so proud and glad over the rapid completion of the improvements at the hospital, that she had little time for grieving.

By the end of November, the wing was ready for occupancy, while eleven children were enjoying the benefits of this home.

Mr. and Mrs. Treat had agreed to Jacqueline's proposition, and were capital managers. The children seemed to love them both, and improved so rapidly under their care that they soon ceased to need it; but others were always ready to take their places, for the fame of this home for convalescents was spreading far and wide, and the neighboring city hospitals sent many a half-cured little creature, to enjoy its benefits.

Bert, true to his word, saved a generous sum out of

his allowance, which was used in buying toys; and he also furnished several pretty sketches, in India ink, and water-colors, of his own work, to decorate the walls, besides a case-full of his childish books. Mr. Randall sent a cabinet of specimens, three tricycles, and a nursery swing, while Bessie contributed more children's books, and some dressed dolls. Mrs. Leavenworth sent several small beds, with the necessary bedding, George and Arlene a half-dozen little rocking-chairs, while the friends of the family, catching their enthusiasm, poured in so many gifts of every description, that they were really in danger of being over-supplied.

As Christmas approached, Mrs. Leavenworth remembered her promise; and, through Jacqueline, issued invitations to Mr. Hapgood, Theo Ransome, Arthur Phelps, and Mark Webber, for a fortnight's visit.

When informed of this, Ginie rolled up her eyes in ecstasy, and forgot herself so far as to say, —

"Golly! Jes like de ole times," she went on, quite unabashed. "'Pears like dey's a comin' back to dis Leabenwo'th house! Jule, what you stan'in' 'round, starin' like a sick goslin' fur? You 'n' I'se got sumpin' to do, now, I tells yer; jes' start yer boots!" and from that time on, Ginie's manner was as important and mysterious as if she had been minister plenipotentiary to some foreign court.

To Jacqueline's delight, every one of the invitations was accepted, and, as the time approached, Ginie grew more mysterious and awful, Jule more bewildered, and Jim more bland and unapproachable. Mr. Hapgood was to have the green room, Theo was to share Jacqueline's chamber, while the two young men would occupy the smaller red and blue rooms, opposite Bert's apartments, using his library for a common lounging-place.

Mark Webber would come on the same footing as Arthur, now, for he was a student at a medical college, taking a high stand in his classes.

Bert came a day before the rest, Jacqueline going down in the carriage to meet him, and give him her warm welcome. On the next day the others began to arrive.

First Arthur, — impatient to see the friends who had been so much to the motherless boy; then Mr. Hapgood and Webber, whose trains had united at a certain junction not far away; and, last of all, Theo, who had started as soon as her school duties would allow.

Her arrival was at about seven in the evening, and, after the surprised horses had brought her to the door, and had been led away to the stable (to wonder, doubtless, if Ike had started a hack line!), they all, with the addition of Mr. Randall and Bessie, gathered

about a late dinner, as jolly a table-full as one would care to see.

It would seem (to one who knew nothing about the Christmas spread under way) that this dinner must be the culmination of Ginie's greatness; and the way she ordered Jim, Jule, and an extra maid — hired for the occasion — about, was almost more than they could bear.

Arthur was looking very well now, and did not limp at all. His long sickness had, however, given him a delicate appearance, which was not unbecoming, though in striking contrast to Webber's broad shoulders, and Bert's long-limbed stalwartness.

Theo had grown handsome. Her high-bred face was full of intellect, and her supple young figure of vigor and health. She seemed overflowing with a vitality that was all the greater for being so firmly restrained to her will.

George privately informed Arlene that he had fallen in love with her on the spot, and it was quite evident that her uncle and Mark Webber were in the same condition. In fact, few could help a deep and genuine admiration for such a fine creature as Theo Ransome.

Webber, too, had improved — grown manly and self-respecting; and Arthur's silly snobbishness seemed quite gone. He was the quiet, well-bred gentleman,

now, giving play to his better nature, and keeping his meaner one under control. So there was no jar upon the evening's enjoyment, and Mr. Hapgood, between the good dinner and better company, was in a state of jollity which set even Mrs. Leavenworth off into hearty fits of laughter now and then.

After dinner, the younger part of the family gathered around the piano, the elders drawing close about the open fire in the library beyond, to listen in quiet comfort; but all were weary with their journey, and ready to retire at a reasonable hour.

The next morning breakfast was scarcely over when Ike appeared before the door with the great three-seated sleigh; while Jim came after with a smaller one, and all were invited to take a drive, and afterwards to visit "Jacqueline's hobby."

"Come, Webber," said Bert, as he took the reins from Jim, "suppose you and Theo take the back seat, and I'll ask Bessie to ride in front with me;" and, nothing loth, the two were soon seated, while Jacqueline and Arthur, with Mrs. Leavenworth and Arlene, also Mr. Hapgood, drove off in the larger sleigh.

It was a perfect winter's morning, each sun ray marking its path in gems, while all earth's unsightly bareness was clothed in the royal robe of winter.

Their gay horses danced along to the music of the

bells, and the young hearts — yes, even the older ones, — beat to a fuller, happier measure than usual.

It was with great pride that Jacqueline took her friends through the hospital, and showed Mr. Hapgood what a change his generous gift had wrought.

Teddy was still an inmate, and apparently the happiest one of all. He had grown taller and stronger, and could, at times, bear his weight upon his feet, but did not yet attempt to take a step, his wheeled chair making him almost independent of help, however.

Mr. Hapgood was immensely surprised to find a fine, large, framed crayon portrait of himself in the playroom, hanging over the wide, pretty fire-place, with its safety fender, and upon turning to the rest for an explanation, was completely taken aback to find it was the work of Jacqueline.

"From memory?" he cried, "how could you do it?"

"I sketched you once when we were at Jackson," she explained. "I was just coming home from a walk, when I saw you as you sat resting on the piazza, and looking thoughtfully off towards the mountains. There was something so fine in your expression that I sat right down on the grass and put you upon paper (for I had my portfolio along), thinking to tease you about it afterwards, as Theo had told me that you would never sit for a photograph. It hap-

pened to be a happy sketch; but somehow the opportunity to tell you didn't come, and one day last fall I came across it, and resolved to try what I could do at a portrait. You have a face one doesn't easily forget, so I succeeded better than I hoped," she added, modestly.

It was evident Mr. Hapgood felt greatly flattered. He looked at it furtively, every little while, and finally whispered to Theo, with almost boyish *naïveté*, "Now, tell me the truth, Theodora, do I look as well as that?"

"Better!" she exclaimed, with hearty meaning. "No picture could do justice to your dear, kind face, though Jacqueline has done wonders, I confess."

"Well, well, I'm not such a rough old bear, after all," he said with complacency, and was really quite vain over the whole affair.

Webber took a great interest in all the sanitary arrangements, and made a careful examination of little Ted. Indeed, he visited the hospital every day during his stay, and made many excellent and practical suggestions, which were acted upon, as well as doing quite remarkable things for one of the child inmates. (But, if I am not careful, you'll be telling me this hospital is *my* hobby next, for here I am rambling off to that, when I had set out to tell about an old-fashioned Christmas.)

It came upon a Thursday that year, and they began

celebrating the day before. Ike and Jim brought a fine tree from the Leavenworth woods, and set it up at the front end of the drawing-room, while another was mysteriously hidden away in a closet off the play-room at the hospital.

To dress these two trees kept all the young people busy the whole day, and while they were lingering over the seven o'clock dinner, Jim slipped into the drawing-room, and, lighting the waxen tapers upon the tree and all the gas-burners in the room, threw the doors wide open with much ceremony as they came trooping in, Bessie and her father with the rest.

Above the tree, loaded with its rich fruit, was suspended a lovely representation of a cherub with spread wings, which seemed hovering over it; while from some unseen corner a fine music-box sweetly played a Christmas carol.

Then from behind a screen appeared Santa Claus, himself, "all in fur from his head to his foot," with a jolly red face, a string of jingling bells about his waist, and a pack of toys over his shoulders.

With a bow and caper which proved that age had not yet impaired his vigor, he ran nimbly up the step-ladder and began to distribute the presents, to many of which were attached rhyming couplets.

"Who is it?" asked Arthur, but almost instantly answered himself. "Why, Bert of course. I might

have thought when he excused himself from table. How well he does it."

"For Arthur Phelps, whose dreamy look
Proves that he may enjoy a book — "

read off old Santa Claus, and Arthur sprang forward to receive a handsome volume.

Other gifts were distributed here and there, then Mr. Hapgood received a gold-headed cane with these saucy words flung at him, in a voice choked with laughter, —

"May*hap*, *good* man, you will not care
To lean upon a cane;
But even young folks need support,
So do not mine disdain."

Then Mr. Randall laughed heartily over the following, which accompanied a fine set of "Classics," —

"One drop less or more, what matter,
When a man is drowned at sea?
One book more or less, dear Pater,
Can not deeper bury thee."

"O you witch!" he cried, with a laughing glance at Bessie. "The wretchedness of the poetry is only exceeded by the impudence of its sentiment. Wait till I get these 'classics' home and I'll pay you, daughter mine."

After a little, Webber was made radiantly happy

by a magnificent microscope, the united gift of Mr. Hapgood, Arthur, and Bert, which bore this legend, —

> "The ills of life, ignored, grow faster.
> Look into them; they'll own you master."

"Indeed they shall," he cried resolutely, "with this microscope I feel like a knight of old, armed for the fray. Now, old disease-germs, just give me a chance at you," shaking his fist with such ludicrous earnestness, that Santa Claus nearly tumbled off his perch with laughter.

Theo was the recipient of a handsome and much-needed winter cloak; and blushed a little at this sly fling, —

> "Proud maiden, don't you dare to scorn me,
> For I surely will adorn thee."

"Thank you, Uncle Jonas," she said archly, aloud; then bending towards him, she kissed his forehead, and said softly; "I didn't know you then, uncle."

"Oh, ho! but you do now. Does that mean if I should happen to give you a stick of candy, you wouldn't throw it in my face?"

"It means you're just like a father, and I love you," she said warmly, her eyes full of tears.

"And if I am, then act as a daughter should," he retorted with meaning, and gave her a return kiss which she felt to be the seal of his adoption.

And so each was remembered many times over, not even a servant being forgotten; then followed music and charades, for which the garret had been searched after old furniture and dresses.

They used the small library for a stage, the audience being seated in the drawing-room, the *portières* between making a very convenient curtain, while Mrs. Leavenworth's room, and the dining-room across the hall, were handy to dress in.

One charade consisted of four scenes.

First — Enter a farmer (George) in top-boots and overcoat, carrying a riding-whip, who is evidently very angry, and stamps around, complaining about his "hoss," which, having been left a moment, has ambled off with the market-wagon, leaving him miles from home. A boy (Arthur) comes in excitedly, carrying an armful of cabbages and turnips, and telling how he has seen the "hoss" running away, the wagon demolished, and the vegetables strewed by the wayside, upon which the farmer exits, wringing his hands and groaning over the incorrigible waywardness of that unprincipled "hoss!"

Scene second — A kitchen. On the table is a large, nice-looking pie. Enter a tramp (Bert) looking very brigandish in his false mustache and slouched hat, looks furtively about for plunder, remarks, "A pie — a whole pie! what luck!" and, snatching it up, exits

triumphantly. Next, a nice old lady (Theo) in Quaker costume, cap, and glasses, comes in, ushering the minister (Webber) in a white wig, and showing him all courtesy and hospitality, expressing her joy at his coming, etc. She seats him at the table.

"It is so fortunate!" she exclaims delightedly; "I have a nice, fresh pie, just baked; you must help me eat it! Let me see — where did I put it?" (Looks everywhere — discovers it is really gone. Disappointment and chagrin.)

Scene third discovers a dwarfish-looking figure, which begins to grow before their eyes. Taller and taller it stretches up, till the huddled web of drapery about its feet is straightened into long, statuesque folds, and its head threatens to graze the ceiling.

"Tall! tall!" shouts somebody in the audience, and the curtain is drawn.

Scene fourth is the whole word, and a general laugh goes around as the opening curtains display two or three couches, placed at regular distances apart, each holding a patient; while Webber, with a doctor's bag, and Jacqueline, in a neat nurse's dress, go from one to another, he diagnosing each case in the most ludicrous manner, while she doses them with his medicines, arranges their pillows, etc., etc.

"Jacqueline's hobby — hos-pi-tal! hospital!" cried

Mr. Hapgood, and a burst of laughter from the actors showed he was right.

The next and last charade was also of three syllables. The first represented Bessie, in pretty morning dress, giving her Irishman "Mike" a good scolding. "Mike," evidently the stupidest of his race, has mixed up her errands, and misunderstood her commands in a ridiculous way, and the whole makes a laughable scene.

The next was a village school, where the scholars were being made to stand in a "row" by their teacher.

It was evidently hard work, for the boys would push each other, and the girls nudge and giggle; but at length her efforts were successful, and, nicely arranged, they proceeded to sing, through the nose, the good old tune of "Lightly Row."

The third scene represented a strong-minded woman (Theo), angrily haranguing a meek-looking man (Arthur) upon the contracted sphere to which her marriage with him had confined her.

"It is 'scope' I want!" she cried, grandiloquently; "I perish for the want of 'scope!'" and waved her hand, which held a book, in such a manner as to hit the meek husband over the head; then loftily marched from the room, the suffering partner turning to say, gloomily, as he rubbed his sore head, "It's evident her arm has 'scope' enough, at least!" before meekly following.

The last scene, representing the whole word, was simply and aptly illustrated by Webber, seated before his new microscope, evidently intent on something beneath its lenses.

"I see it," he began gravely.

"And so do we!" cried George quickly, from the audience, "it is *microscope!*"

"Very good!" laughed Webber, and soon actors and audience were mingled in happy converse.

The next morning, after the merry Christmas greetings and breakfast were over, the big sleigh took all of the family, except Mrs. Leavenworth and Arlene, over to the hospital, picking up Bessie by the way, to help distribute the presents from their tree, which had been left till morning, so as not to keep the little ones out of their early beds.

Arrived there, Jacqueline found several more gifts had been sent in, so the children were sent to the parlor while the tree was placed in position, and Santa Claus donned his dress. Then Mrs. Treat led the children in and seated them in order, but no attempt was made to repress their laughter and cries of delight, as the funny old St. Nick handed down gift after gift, with odd speeches and nursery rhymes, meeting the wants of the little ones, which had been freely expressed beforehand to both Mrs. Treat and Jacqueline. They had to hurry through, in order to

be in time for church, but they left a rapturous little crowd behind, while already the odor of roasting turkey, for their noon dinner, filled the house.

Then a swift homeward drive, the hasty donning of Sunday wraps, and all were off for church, its beautiful service filling their hearts with the "peace and good-will" Christ brought to man, that natal day, nearly nineteen centuries ago.

There was an appetizing lunch awaiting their return. Then every horse and sleigh their own and the Randall stables could furnish was brought into service, to take the young people and the hospital children for a drive. *Such* a drive! — with laughter, singing, and shouting, above the clamor of the bells, as they drove over the long country roads, and out upon the frozen lake, for a merry dash that set the blood tingling in every vein.

Teddy, tucked in between Jacqueline and Bessie, was the gayest of the crowd; and, finally, turning up his rosy little face, said warmly, —

"Jetty, 'tis your Ted! he's *so* happy!" and she felt the honest words were a real benediction, that Christmas Day.

Home again, and almost dusk; they had little enough time to dress for Genie's masterpiece, the dinner. This grand affair lasted from five till seven, and was, indeed, a gastronomical feat. It lacked no

appointment of taste, elegance, or luxury — unless we consider wine as essential to these, which, happily, our friends did not, even Arthur having forsworn his old habits forever.

Dinner well over, other guests began to arrive for the evening, and soon the large, handsome rooms were well filled with the more particular friends of the family. They were soon all engaged in some of the best of the old-fashioned games, such as "Twenty Questions," "How, When, and Where," "Personal Conundrums," "Magic Writing," "Stage Coach," etc., etc., in which all joined, both old and young.

Of course, Mr. Hapgood was the life of the whole affair, and, nobly seconded by Bert and Bessie, kept the fun going, till Christmas Day was literally a thing of the past, when, with merry good-bys and expressions of complete satisfaction for their evening's entertainment, the guests reluctantly departed, with only one regret — that "Christmas comes but once a year."

CHAPTER XXIII.

PAINS AND PLEASURES OF WEALTH.

It was in the following May that Bert, eagerly watching the college postman as he approached his door, reached out a hand for the square, white missive, with its rather bold, round hand, which he knew to be from Jacqueline, and opening it, read with a smiling face, these words: —

My dear Brother, — You don't know what a happy household we are! Aunt Arl has a little girl — the sweetest dot of a creature you ever saw, with big, dark eyes, and a fuzz of golden hair about her little, shell-pink ears. O Bert! I wish you were here; but it won't be long till the 20th of June, and that will bring you! By that time she'll be perfectly lovely! She's to have our mother's name, and mine — Celia Jacqueline Harper. What do you think of that? Uncle George is too funny for any thing; he holds her exactly as if she were a block of wood in a blanket, and makes awful faces! Calls her "Stick-in-the-mud," and all sorts of outlandish names — that darling little angel! But grandma — O Bert! she looks too beautiful with that baby in her arms, with her dear, silvery-white hair all fluffy over her forehead, and that peaceful smile of hers about her lips and eyes — but you'll laugh at my ravings. Bessie is just as silly over it as I am, and if she wasn't so dreadfully busy getting ready to graduate, would be here all the time.

Do you know, I've jumped another class, and now stand in the second year? So I won't be such an old maid when I graduate, after all. I had a letter from Theo last week, and she's going abroad, at last, with her Uncle Jonas; isn't that good? They expect to sail the 15th, and after three months of traveling about, will go to Paris, where she is to study in the École des Beaux Arts the rest of the year, and perhaps longer.

Arthur passed through, the other day, with his father, on his way to Annapolis, where he is to enter the Naval School. Think of Arthur a "middy!" He looks really well, and feels sure this kind of life will be good for him. We all liked his father, who is a tall, pale gentleman, rather reserved and quiet, but very proud of his son. And, indeed, Arthur *is* a nice boy, now. I never saw such a change in any one.

But I must tell you what a grand thing Webber has done for little Katie Gray, who, we thought, would never be well, and was to be a fixture, like Ted. After he went home Christmas, he studied up her case, and has been doctoring her by correspondence, till he has actually cured her! All the doctors say it is a wonderful thing; somebody has written it up for the *Lancet*, and Webber bids fair to become famous before long. He has already been offered a professorship somewhere, with a fair salary, which I presume he will accept, — so Arthur told me. Then he sent a brace, partly of his own invention, for Ted, which we put on him every day, and with it he is really learning to walk. Just think of it! If Ted should grow well like other people again! But he shall always be *my* Ted, just the same.

There! I believe that's all the news. Everybody sends lots of love, and CELIA JACQUELINE a darling little kiss.

Ever lovingly yours,

JACA.

"Hooray!" shouted Bert so loudly that his room-mate, a powerful but indolent looking six-footer, looked around, to ask hastily, —

"What in creation ails you? Got a remittance?"

"No, better yet — a chapter of good news! We've got a baby, though, at home — isn't that better than money?" laughing merrily.

"Well, that's according to one's taste — when you're rolling in wealth, a little more or less don't matter. By the way, that confounded old tailor's after me again, and where I'm going to raise the money I can't conceive!"

Bert's brows contracted a little, and the smile left his face. This was a chronic complaint of Foster's, which had become something worse than a nuisance to Bert, who had "lent" him, without being repaid, until "forbearance had ceased to be a virtue." So he said rather shortly, —

"What did you get that last suit for, anyhow, Tom? Your other was good enough."

"Oh, yes! any thing's good enough for a pauper like me, I suppose — but I don't know as I enjoy last year's styles any better than you do!"

Bert flushed hotly. He was generous to a fault, and such an insinuation cut him to the quick. It was true that he was far more favorably situated than Foster, whose father could afford nothing like the

allowance Bert had; but was it right that he should be saddled with that young man's debts — and especially extravagant ones?

"It seems to me," thought Bert, "that if I were poor, I'd be independent, at least, and wear rags before I'd do such genteel begging as Foster does — for that's all it amounts to. He'll never pay a cent!"

So, for once, he refused to listen to the broad hint, and flung himself, rather disgustedly, from the room.

The fact is, Bert was finding that riches bring with them great cares, temptations, and perplexities.

To be generous without being gullible, and hospitable without being prodigal, were sometimes difficult questions for a boy scarce twenty to solve.

For instance, this very night there was to be a freshman "spread," in which he was supposed to take a part — and a large one, too. There would be beer and wine, of course, and much riot, drunkenness, and profanity. It wasn't the kind of a crowd he liked, but what was he to do? Such a social fellow couldn't live alone, or associate only with the "mossbacks" and professors. And if he joined this gay crowd, could he keep from drinking, and perhaps even gambling — as they were apt to do when excited by wine? He had yielded once or twice already, to his utter shame and self-disgust, repenting next day in dust and ashes — should he go into it again?

He was walking along moodily, his hands in his pockets, his brows bent in a frown, when a sudden "Hello!" reached his ears, and looking up he saw Webber standing opposite, with outstretched hand.

"Webber!" he cried, "Mark Webber! Where did you come from?"

"The station, last — and am on my way to Prof. Gaylord's this minute. But why such a heavy mood in my merry friend Amory?"

"Oh, bothers of one kind and another; do you ever have them, Mark?" linking an arm in his, and turning to walk with him back across the quadrangle of close-clipped grass, interspersed with shaded gravel walks.

"Who doesn't? I'm in a big bother now," laughing a little.

"What is it, Mark? Can't I help you? If it's money now" — and Bert's ready hand went towards his vest pocket.

"But it isn't!" quickly arresting the hand; "at least, not in that way. It's this, Bert. I've had a call to undertake surgical clinics in the medical class here, and also one to the professorship of Greek and Latin elsewhere. The former is in my line, but only pays about half as much; now, which had I better accept? I need money, but I need to keep on in my own work, too. I can live and save some-

thing on eight hundred a year, but fourteen hundred is better, and would enable me to make some headway with the medical library I'm trying to start. It's a little hard to decide, my boy!" he ended, with a cheerful air.

"I declare, Mark, I wish you had the money, and I didn't — you'd make a good use of it, and it only bothers me! Now, see here, what's a fellow to do?" and he gave a detailed account of his own dilemma.

"It seems to me that's not so hard to solve, Bert, though, I grant you, it would be easier if you were poor; then you'd be gently let alone! But a man has only to take a stand and keep it, and people soon begin to allow him his own way without question or comment. The only really hard place is on the shifting ground of indecision — you can't serve God and Mammon! And this is a case where those words apply with peculiar force. If you're known as a gay chap, always in for every thing, questionable or not, you'll have to give up and go the gait — and it's a pretty rapid down-hill stride! But if you are known as a Christian — manly, upright, and with a mind and conscience of your own — you'll soon be left alone by those who would drag you down. They may call you a 'moss-back,' but who cares? Such names can't hurt, but excesses and degrading pleasures will —

body and soul both. There's one thing, Bert, you've brought me to a decision — I'll take the surgical clinics and eight hundred! I'll stay here, and we'll see if it isn't possible to rake up a crowd of bright, lively, wide-awake fellows, who can be funny without being vulgar, and enjoy a good 'spread,' now and then, without liquor."

"No, no, Webber, not for me! Don't give up better prospects on my account."

"I don't believe they were better, Bert. I felt inclined to this all the time, but thought that I oughtn't to let the bigger salary go by. But money isn't every thing, and now I'm decided — here I stay! Who's your room-mate, my boy? Are you much attached to him?"

"No, he's a sponge! That is — I didn't mean that, but —"

"Oh, well! 'it's a good word — let it stand,' as Shakespeare says, doesn't he? I've no doubt it's applicable. What I was thinking was, that I'd like to room with you — that's all."

"Would you? Good! I'd ask nothing better. I can fix it easily, too; for Foster has been talking a good deal lately about joining a club, so I don't believe he'll raise any objection to the change. But tell me, Webber, for here we are at Prof. Gaylord's, why do you take so much pains for me?"

Webber looked him in the face a moment, then said gently, —

"Bert, I stood on shifting ground once myself, and your sister reached me out a helping hand. Do you think I could repay her better than by doing as much for the brother she loves better than herself?"

Man as he called himself, the tears leaped to Bert's eyes, and a sudden memory of that sweet sister — loving, unselfish, living for others — came to him like a breath from a purer clime.

"Mark," he said huskily, wringing his hand, "I'd be a brute if I did go wrong! God has sent you just in time!"

Mark did stay, and the consequent changes and labors of that day, in helping the lazy Foster out and the active Webber in, gave a sufficient excuse for declining to assist at the "spread" that evening. Instead, the two young men took a long stroll in the sweet May twilight, having a delightful, rambling talk over past, present, and future, and returning with clean souls and refreshed bodies to their rooms; while many a poor young fellow that night entered the downward road, and went to his heavy slumbers, to awaken disgusted, stained, and miserable!

It was a glowing letter that Bert wrote home next day, and it relieved the minds of all the family; for

somehow his missives had not been quite satisfactory of late; there was a vein of recklessness running through them that was not like the old Bert.

It was a great relief to feel that such a young man as Webber was domiciled with him; and when vacation approached, the latter received so warm an invitation from Mrs. Leavenworth (in which the whole household joined) to spend it with them, that he could not refuse.

When Bert and his friend arrived, they found Ike awaiting them with the cart, while Jacqueline and Bessie stood upon the piazza of the dear old home, watching for them as they drove into the grounds, across the long slanting shadows of the June afternoon.

Arlene was sitting there, too, a fluff of fine white linen and lace across her lap; while grandma was just within the French window of the drawing-room.

A stranger would have noticed but little difference in the warmth of the greetings given the two, for Webber, through his kindness and loyalty to Bert and his grand deeds at the hospital, had made himself almost a son of the house.

To be sure, Jacqueline did not hang about his neck, but Mrs. Leavenworth gave him a very tender kiss, and called him "her dear boy" in such a way that it touched him to the heart.

Then the baby was handed about, Arlene watching in an agony, for fear they should hurt the dainty bundle.

In the midst of this George's hearty voice crying, "Drop that eyester!" came from the drive, and set them off into a gale of laughter. George so seldom used slang, that such an outburst was very effective.

The young father was the next to catch up the tiny creature, Bert watching him with an amused air.

"Now, really, Uncle George, you aren't so bad — quite graceful, indeed; from Jaca's letter I thought you'd be about as handy as a cockney at sea!"

"Oh! I'm learning," he laughed, giving the infant an extra toss that brought a scream from his wife, indignant protests from the girls, and shouts of laughter from Bert and Webber.

"Give me that child at once!" said Bessie with majesty; "the idea of turning her upside down in that fashion — b'ess its itty heart! there! there!"

Bert dropped on the upper step, and doubled up in an agony.

"O Bess! you'll be the death of me!" he gasped. "Why, you're worse than old Ginie herself!" and he rocked to and fro, the mirthful tears in his eyes.

Bessie was highly indignant. "Ginie, indeed! She has some manners, at least! Nice example to

set your cousin, isn't it? Now, if you'll get up and behave yourself, and sit down in that rocking-chair, I'll let you hold her five minutes — perhaps!" And Bert at once complied, with an air of such meekness and patience, that even Bessie had to succumb to the universal merriment.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JACQUELINE'S RIDE.

JACQUELINE was one of those lovely souls who ask so little that every one is anxious to lavish gifts upon them; so, when Mrs. Leavenworth announced that she thought the child needed more exercise, and was going to buy a pony for her birthday gift, everybody wanted a hand in the matter; so George and Arlene bought the habit, Bert a beautiful saddle, cushioned luxuriously enough for a princess (if, indeed, princesses need any more than common people), Bessie a whip with a dainty handle of mother-of-pearl, and Webber as fine a pair of riding-gloves as he could find for her little hands; and, after breakfast, being artfully inveigled out to the piazza by concerted action of the family, she found Jim displaying every ivory in his head, as he led a little black thorough-bred, richly caparisoned, up and down before the door.

"Oh!" she cried, not specially noticing the side-saddle, "you have a new horse, Bert. What a beauty!"

"No," said grandma, just behind her, "it is not

Bert's, but Jacqueline's. I'm glad you admire it, my dear."

"Mine? My very own? O grandma, my darling grandma! how could you know I have always longed to ride?"

"Not by your telling, certainly, for you never seem to want any thing, except what you have; but there are few young girls who don't enjoy riding, so I thought you ought to try it. Come, Jim, help Miss Jacqueline on, and lead her about the drive a little, till she gets used to the motion."

But Bert was before him, and instructed Jacqueline how to place her boot firmly in his palm, and, with a firm grip of the saddle-pommels, lift herself with a spring to her place in the seat; then as he led her about, gave her further instructions, until Jacqueline, always graceful, soon caught the idea, and learned to sway with the horse, and, while keeping her spine perpendicular, let every joint and muscle be as flexible as india rubber, until, in time, there should be perfect unison between horse and rider.

"I'm learning," she cried gayly, as flushed and excited, her hair flying about her face, they stopped before the steps after several rounds. "Now, Bert, let me try it alone once; I'm sure I can manage."

With smiling faces they all watched her, as, grow-

ing more courageous, she urged her horse into a canter, and came breathlessly back again.

"It's delightful," she gasped, "only it shakes one like a pepper-pot. But I feel as if I had wings, and could fly through the air. I don't wonder we say, 'as happy as a bird.'"

All laughed at her pronounced pleasure, and as Bert helped her to dismount, he called, —

"Ike! Ike! bring Sultan around for me, won't you? Now get on your togs, Jaca, and we'll have a sure-enough ride."

"My — what?"

"Come," said Arlene, holding out a hand, "you haven't had our birthday remembrance yet — George's and mine" — and leading her into Mrs. Leavenworth's room, she displayed the habit of hunter's green, sparingly decorated with gold braid, and the little English hat which accompanied it.

Jacqueline was quite overwhelmed, but as she came out again to display herself, Mark Webber, with a low bow, and some light words that covered real feeling, handed her the beautiful gloves, while Bessie, who had run breathlessly over, produced the exquisite whip.

"You're too good to me," exclaimed the girl, whose seventeen years now seemed all flooded with sunshine, and, with a heart full to bursting, she

was lifted lightly to the saddle by Bert's sturdy young arm.

"Beautifully done," cried George, clapping his hands enthusiastically; and amid merry injunctions and good-bys, they rode away, as fine a young pair as one would care to see on a summer's morning.

It wasn't many days before Bessie and Mark joined them; the former on her own pony, and the latter upon Sultan's mate. Indeed, the equestrian fever kept spreading until they sometimes mustered a regular cavalcade of several couples, and though some of the mounts would have made a horseman smile, they all jogged along after a fashion, and furnished healthful pleasure for the young folks.

They had started out, one August evening about sundown, eight of them, — Lou Talbot and her brother, Fannie Gilbert and George's brother Carl (who had come to finish up his summer's vacation), with our former four, when some one proposed an eight-mile ride to a pretty village by a lonely road, partly through a strip of woods.

So they cantered along, sometimes in a promiscuous group, again pairing off to make a race over some fine, level strip of ground, all so engaged with their horses, their visiting, and the glory of the sunset before them, that they did not especially notice the heavens behind. Suddenly an exclamation from Charlie, —

"Look at that sky" — made them all glance back quickly, to see that the eastern horizon was covered by dense, angry-looking storm-clouds.

Even as they looked, a jagged flash of lightning rent the black curtain, and the sullen, quivering roar of distant but heavy thunder smote their ears.

"We must go right back," cried Lou in affright. "I'm dreadfully afraid of thunder and lightning — oh, dear!" as another vivid flash half blinded her.

"Especially thunder," exclaimed her brother with mild sarcasm; "it's so dangerous!"

"I don't care, it sounds dangerous, anyhow," was her retort, as they wheeled their horses to gallop towards home.

But this was only riding into the storm, and soon they began to meet its rushing gusts of wind and first dash of water-drops, like the peppering grape-shot of an advance-guard in battle. Then, in a burst that left them no breathing space, the real artillery began. They were bombarded with hail for musketry, while the heavy roar of the sky-cannon seemed almost continuous.

The horses crowded together, and became almost unmanageable.

Charlie was mounted on a livery horse, which had been restive all the evening, and now, resentful of this close crowding, suddenly stopped, and began

kicking right and left. Charlie kept his seat, but one of the brute's heels flew up against Jacqueline, so that she felt, simultaneously, a sickening pain in her ankle and the quivering leap of her horse, as, hurt and frightened, he tore from the group and carried her onwards.

He was a small beast, but wiry, and full of nerve and fire, while her girlish slimness made but a light weight for his back.

Maddened by the pain, and the fury of the elements, he tore away, while the first shouts of dismay from the rest of the group were quickly lost in the distance.

Jacqueline never knew how she held on, for, giddy with the pain in her leg, blinded and beaten by the storm, and dazed by the suddenness of his forward leap, it was only the ever-present instinct of self-preservation that made her cling, as she did, to the pommels of her saddle, without attempting to guide or control her horse.

On, on they dashed, fortunately along a straight road; and now the hail changed to a pouring rain, that wet her to the skin, but relieved her of the fearful faintness which had at first threatened to overcome her.

Every leap of her horse gave her intense pain, but she soon began to gather up the reins (and

On, on they dashed — and now the hail changed to a pouring rain. — Page 368.

her own courage), and tried to quiet the frightened creature.

"So, Prince, so! Beauty, whoa! whoa!" she said with firm gentleness, pulling strongly upon the bit, and was gratified to find that the intelligent beast noticed her presence, and slightly checked his speed.

Little by little she succeeded in regaining partial control, until she had brought him down to a nervous canter, when she began to notice behind her the hard gallop of other horses in the distance.

As Prince heard it also, he started nervously, and, spite of all her efforts to quiet him, bolted again.

It was now quite dark, and the fiercest of the storm was passed, but the rain still fell in a gentle downpour. From her left, the town lights began to gleam out, — she was nearing home. Now if she could keep her strength a little longer, — but this was her last conscious thought, for just that instant her horse swerved suddenly at something by the roadside, and the next was dashing along, — riderless and free.

He made straight for home, and Ike, who was watching anxiously by the great gates (for all the household were greatly worried over the absent ones), started with horror to see Miss Jacqueline's pony coming home without his mistress.

He caught the bridle of the tired creature, and hastened with him to the stable, groaning as he went,

"Oh, the little miss! the little miss! What'll us do now?" Then he raised his voice in a loud call for Jim, who, appearing from the kitchen, was soon mounted on the last remaining horse in the stable, and dashing up the road; while Ike, after giving the foaming Prince a hasty and almost mechanical rub-down, went into the house to tell the dreadful news.

"I can't bear to," he muttered. "I'll make Ginie do it."

But Mrs. Rutter happened to be in the kitchen, and it was she who took in the alarming intelligence, breaking it as gently as possible.

Mrs. Leavenworth turned from the window, where she had been uneasily looking out into the darkness, while Arlene and George started from their chairs.

"'If I am bereft of my children, I am bereft,'" said the former, with a blanching face, as she sank upon a chair. "What shall we do?"

"Jim has gone" — began Mrs. Rutter.

"Tell Ike to get a livery rig at once, — an easy carriage," said George, buttoning up his coat energetically. "She has been thrown. Arlene, have a fire built in mother's grate; it is chilly to-night, and let every thing be ready for her there. We may not be able to get her upstairs. That will be best, mother?"

"Yes, George."

The old lady seemed to have lost all strength, and sat helplessly moaning, with a pitiful white face.

Meanwhile Jacqueline, quite unconscious, lay in a little sombre heap by the roadside, while Bert and Webber, urging their horses onward in a desperate effort to overtake her flying steed, passed in the darkness, entirely oblivious of what they were leaving behind them. She had been thrown near the small house of Pat Flynn, and it was a little dog belonging to the children which came to her rescue, first licking her face, then running to the house door and barking furiously.

"Now, phwat's got into the crathur?" exclaimed Pat, angrily, to his daughter Norah, who had just been giving him a late supper after the younger children were in bed.

"Do go and see, pa; it must be something's wrong," was her answer; and, lighting his lantern, he went cautiously out, following the dog's excited movements till he came to Jacqueline, upon which he raised an outcry for his daughter.

"Hurry, Norah, to howld the lanthern. It's a gal, and she's kilt intirely, I'm a-thinkin'. Run, run!" and the trembling girl was quickly at his side.

He lifted the unconscious figure gently, and, carrying it inside, laid it lightly on a lounge.

"It's the little leddy at Leavenworth's," cried

Norah, as she caught sight of the face; "that sweet Miss Jackleen what helped us so. Oh, dear, dear! I'm fearful she's dead."

"Fetch the camphor, child, and loose her dress, while I wake Jud to run to the house an' tell 'em. Ah, woe's me! but it 'll be a sorra night for thim now," and he briskly chafed the lifeless white hands.

Just then the rest of the riders went thundering by, but though he ran to the door and shouted after them, the noise of their horses' hoofs drowned his voice, and they kept right on, eager to find what would be the result of Jacqueline's mad ride.

Then he hastened to wake the bewildered Jud, bidding him bring "the folks from Leavenworth's and a docther." This the boy hastened to do, with one startled glance at the motionless form on the lounge.

As he returned to Jacqueline's side her eyes slowly opened, and she looked up in his face with the dazed, wondering glance of a soul just awakened.

"Where am I?" she whispered.

"Don't you know me, Miss Amory?" asked Norah's pleasant voice. "You're quite safe wid us. Please take a sip o' this; it 'll make you betther."

Jacqueline swallowed the mixture, then said, —

"My ankle hurts. Could you take off my boot?"

As Norah did so, she uttered an exclamation.

"Oh, but it's mashed bad, miss. What's happened? Is it broke?"

"Some one's horse kicked me, I think. There were a good many together," she said faintly.

"Wait an' I'll bathe it," said Norah briskly. "Ah, but it's a bad bruise! Pa, see if there isn't some hot water left over yet. They say that's good for sprains and such."

By this time Bert and Webber had reached home, to find George just starting out with the carriage. He told of the horse's coming home; so, leaving their steeds to Ike's care, they sprang in beside him. Bert talked in almost hysterical excitement, Webber keeping grave and still, but occasionally suggesting something to do. They met the cavalcade of frightened equestrians just a little way out, and stopping them, found no one had seen or heard any thing of Jacqueline.

"We'll get these girls safe home," said Carl, "and then come back and help you find her."

"And I shall stop at your house, Bert," called Bessie's tearful voice, "until we know something definite."

So they parted, and the carriage proceeded slowly; George holding out a lantern and looking carefully from one side of the carriage, Webber doing the same from the other, while Bert, almost unmanned, looked everywhere, and thought he saw her at every turn.

As they approached Pat's small house, a boy suddenly called out from the roadside, —

"Say, be you a-lookin' for a girl that got throwed off a horse?"

"Yes, yes," cried all.

"Well, she's to our house, just beyond. Have you got a doctor?"

"Yes," said George, "get up by the driver, quick, and show him the way."

"Is she much hurt?" called Bert, in tones of intense anxiety.

"Dead, I guess," was the laconic answer.

Bert sank back with a groan, and for the rest of the way there was not a sound in the carriage, as each tried to comprehend the whole height and depth of this terrible news.

Imagine their relief when, upon entering the little room, Jacqueline smiled up at them in welcome.

She was ghastly pale, to be sure, and evidently suffering, but the relief was so great to Bert that, after one kiss, he ran from the room, and sitting down on the doorstep without, sobbed like a baby.

Meanwhile, Webber was examining the bruised ankle with a grave face, and with George's and Norah's efficient aid, soon had it thoroughly dressed and bandaged.

"The bone is hurt some, I think, Jacqueline," he said, as he finished, "but I hope time will heal it. You have borne this bravely; now a little more pa-

tience and we will have you safe home. Norah, could you go with us? Mr. Amory isn't much good to-night, and I want some one to support her ankle every instant, so that it won't get the slightest jar, or strain, while Mr. Harper and myself carry her to the carriage."

"Yes, sir, I'll do any thing for Miss Amory," was the quick response, while her father added, —

"You stay till they've done wid ye, Norah. We'll manage alone, and there's nothin' too good for this young leddy, what's been so kind to the likes of us."

Bert, ashamed of himself, now entered and aided somewhat in carrying her out, and, as every one was determined to save her all possible suffering, they managed to make her comparatively comfortable. They met Carl and Charlie just after starting, who, finding things were better than they had hoped, turned back with them.

"Carl," called George, after a little, "if your horse can stand it, ride on ahead, and tell them just how it is."

"All right," said Carl, as he urged his weary beast forward.

He reached the house to find it in an uproar. Jim, who had taken some turn by which he had missed the returning riders, was back with no news to tell, and frightened quite out of his none too brilliant

wits; Ginie and Jule were wringing their hands and howling darky fashion; Mrs. Rutter, pale and nervous, was flying about, trying to get things ready for any thing that might have happened; Arlene, pale, too, but quiet, was vainly trying to hush her crying baby, who had been roused by all this excitement; while Bessie and Mrs. Leavenworth literally wept in each other's arms, utterly regardless of Mr. Randall, who walked the floor, and almost angrily insisted that things would come out all right in the end.

Carl's entrance, seeming to confirm his words, brought glad relief; and when Jacqueline was gently carried in, and deposited upon her grandmother's bed, every one restrained himself, to be as quiet and helpful as possible.

Jacqueline was suffering intensely, and could say but little. Her wet clothes added to her discomfort, and long chills shook her weakened frame. It seemed to her she had never appreciated a good bed before, when her clothes having been almost cut away, she lay at length in the clean, dry sheets, with soft heated blankets wrapped about her.

A little prayer of thanksgiving was her last drowsy thought, as yielding to the opiate Webber had given her, she dropped away into that strange fitful slumber of pain and illness, when the tortured nerves yield, perforce, to the power of the slumberous drug.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

Prosperity is apt to show us our enemies, adversity our friends, but sickness seems to turn all to sympathizers.

At least so it seemed to Jacqueline, when she was able to think about it at all, for each vied with the other to do for her. The door was besieged by anxious inquirers, and her room might have been either a bower or a bakery, from the amount of flowers and delicate viands that were sent in.

But for three weeks it was all lost upon poor little Jacqueline, as she lay restless and delirious in the fiery grip of fever.

A physician was called from the city to assist Mark Webber, and Mrs. Rutter was her faithful and efficient nurse. Her ankle was badly injured, and added to the suffering and fever, while the shock to nerves and brain had been very great.

After a fortnight of this wearing illness there came a day when every thing in the house was hushed to a stillness that made even the buzz of a fly seem

harassing. Arlene, with nurse and baby, had gone over to Bessie's to insure greater quiet; Grandma Leavenworth sat with clasped hands, praying in her chair; Bert wandered restlessly about the garden-walks; two doctors consulted with Webber in the dining-room; while Mrs. Rutter never left her patient's side. Jacqueline was asleep, and when she woke, then would be the hope of life, or the certainty of death.

All the afternoon and night she lay in that deep, strange slumber, so like its sister — death — and sometimes they had difficulty in determining whether the breath had not, indeed, left her body.

The dawn presaged a lovely day, with its languorous summer heat lightened by a fresh breeze. The curtains in the sick-room swayed lightly to and fro, and the brilliant sun-rays stole in through every chink in the closed shutters; a fresher, purer air pervaded the room, reviving the watchers after their silent vigil, and then, from the bed, came a faint voice, —

"Grandma!"

In a moment, her grandmother stood by her side, summoned from the next room by Mrs. Rutter.

"Yes, darling," she said, bending over her, but trying to suppress all emotion in face and voice.

"Grandma — have I been — sick?"

"Yes, my child, and the doctor wants you to take this now; drink it and don't try to talk; just sleep and rest."

Obedient always, Jacqueline swallowed the strengthening draught, and again closed her eyes to drop soon into a natural, refreshing slumber, for she had passed the crisis, and would live.

Another fortnight and she began to seem quite like herself, reclining luxuriously in a large invalid chair, and trying to hold her part in the subdued talk around her; though she was still a very pale, thin, little Jaca, her large dark eyes in her white face looking, as Bert informed her, "like burnt holes in a blanket."

Her ankle was improving, but would keep her on the couch for some time.

"And you may be thankful it is no worse, my lady," said Webber, with a shake of the head. "I was fearful at one time that you would have to go on crutches for months, but your active, temperate life is greatly in your favor, and the injured bone has behaved splendidly. Two or three weeks more, and you'll be as brisk as ever."

They were not unhappy weeks, though very quiet, as the boys had all gone back to college. Jacqueline was one of those fortunate creatures who have resources of entertainment within themselves; she loved to read, to sketch, even to lie and think; she could

feast her eyes on the scene from her room window, her ears on Arlene's soft piano-playing in the drawing-room, and when these failed her could lie in utter peace and stillness, wrapped in her own happy thoughts of good-will on earth and hopes in heaven.

At length there came a day when, supported on George's arm, she walked out to the dinner-table, and sat in her old place, surrounded by those who had grown the dearer by their tender care, and patient love.

It was Thanksgiving, and Bert and Mark had run down to stay till Monday. Mr. Randall and Bessie were also present, and Mr. and Mrs. Case, who had greatly endeared themselves to all the family by their thoughtful attentions during Jacqueline's illness.

With a brace to support her weak ankle, Jacqueline could walk quite well, and looked very graceful and sweet in her trailing blue wrapper, with the fine lace shading her white throat, and transparent little hands.

"Really, Jaca," cried Bessie, with pretended envy, "you look prettier than ever; how do you manage it? Now, when I'm sick I'm a gaunt, bloodless fright."

"The idea!" laughed Jacqueline. "You couldn't be a fright if you tried. But oh, Bessie, how nice it does seem to feel I am all here! Supposing I had had to lose my foot as that dreadful doctor suggested!"

"Gracious!" cried Bessie; "did you hear that?" while Webber started and looked around.

"Were you conscious then?" he asked surprisedly.

"Yes," she said; "it was the strangest feeling. I seemed to be in some dark tomb of a place, and from a tower-like window, way above me, I heard voices. One said, 'I tell you, sir, it must come off. The bone is irreparably injured and nothing but amputation will save her life;' and then, like a flash, I knew I was in bed, and this was some strange man talking about *my* foot. Then I heard Mark's voice, and oh, how good it sounded! 'I beg your pardon, sir, but it shall *not* be amputated. She has every thing in her favor: youth, strength, and a naturally good constitution, and I believe we can save her, foot and all.' Then I felt perfectly safe and dropped off into unconsciousness again.

"This memory did not come back to me until the day you boys went away, when I heard grandma telling Mark he belonged to us now, and must not think of calling any place home but this. Then it all leaped to my mind like a flash of light, and I knew your brave stand had saved my foot."

"It's true, Jaca," said Bert. "That doctor we called from the city has a great reputation, and was angry enough to think so young a medic as Mark would dare oppose him. He'd have had your foot

off in no time, I tell you, but Webber actually fought him, and grandma backed Webber like a good fellow, till the old duffer went off in high dudgeon. Then Mark sent for Gaylord, and they worked together like a pair of shears, and brought you through standing."

"And, under God, I owe this to you, brother Mark," said Jacqueline, as she impulsively stepped to his side and held out her hand.

"I owe more than this to you, sister Jaca," was his earnest response, "inasmuch as a whole soul is better than a whole body. So let there be no obligations between us."

"That's comfortable," said Bert. "Now, Mark, being Jaca's brother makes you mine, of course, and don't you forget it."

"I'm not likely to," was the smiling, but earnest, answer; and when, the next Monday, all the ladies gave Webber a good-by kiss, just as they did Bert, and Mrs. Leavenworth said, in a matter-of-course way, "You'll be home for the Christmas holidays, Mark," he felt that his adoption was, indeed, complete.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Leavenworth would not allow Jacqueline to enter school again, but had a very accomplished lady to give her lessons, while drawing and music teachers came from the city.

Bessie, who did not feel that graduating from

school meant a cessation of learning, studied some things with her, and they thus spent several hours of the day together.

For a long time Mrs. Leavenworth was afraid to let Jacqueline mount her pony again, but finally consented, if Jim would ride at her side, his hand on her bridle. Prince behaved beautifully, and gradually the old fear died away as the girl grew stronger and more accustomed to him, while Prince showed such an affection for her that he would whinny whenever he heard her voice, and, if loose, follow her all about the yard. So she had many a fine canter, when the weather would permit.

Every day she visited her hospital, which still occupied a great deal of her thoughts, and was, indeed, growing noted for the good it did.

In the early spring, the only child of a wealthy gentleman of the town having died, he endowed it with five thousand dollars, to be known as the "Mary Landon Fund," and a memorial for his well-beloved child, which enabled them to increase its capacity; while an ornamental extension was added to the front, to give a reception-room, office, etc., below, and extra rooms above.

One or two more attendants were also hired, to assist the Treats in their increasing labors.

One day, as Mrs. Leavenworth, Mr. Randall, and

Jacqueline were talking it over, that gentleman said, —

"What we need now is a resident physician, whom we can always depend upon. Dr. Wise is growing old, and these new practitioners I know little about. Besides, they have their regular work. There should be a physician right in the house — or grounds, at least — ready for any emergency, night or day."

"Oh," said Jacqueline, "how I wish it could be Mark!"

"And why not?" said her grandmother smilingly. "I have seen this want for some time, and have been planning for it. Now, hear what I have to suggest. I have never yet given any large sum to this 'hobby' of Jacqueline's, not because I did not feel interested, but simply because I wanted to let you, my dear, feel it was upon your hands, and that you could not too easily fall back upon me. I think parents often assume too much responsibility for their children in such things, and so take all the pith and interest out of their generous schemes. This I would not do; but you have shown courage, good management, and a sincere desire to deny yourself, so now I want to have the pleasure of doing something, also. I will buy the lot to the south, which, you know, is for sale, and remove the old house which stands there farther back, to be made into a surgery, laboratory,

and office. Then I will build upon the old foundation a new cottage, in the Queen Anne style, which shall be an ornament to the grounds, and a home for our resident physician, *Dr. Webber*, whose salary, fixed at a comfortable figure, I will pay yearly, out of certain property which has, of late, been bringing a larger interest than ever before."

"O grandma!" cried Jacqueline, "that will be too grand for any thing!"

"Really, you couldn't do better, my friend," added Mr. Randall warmly; and when the plan was proposed to Mark, he accepted it with grateful willingness, saying it would give him the chance for study that he so much needed, and assure him a very comfortable income and pleasant home.

So it was agreed that, in the following autumn, when he should be released from his engagement at college, the home should be ready for the doctor, and he for the home.

About the time he took possession, a letter came from Theo, with the joyful news that the picture upon which she had been so long engaged was accorded a place in the *Salon*, and was also well hung.

"Uncle is the proudest man you ever saw," she wrote, "and actually makes a goose of himself, going and gazing at it by the hour. By the way, he is

getting so attached to Paris, I don't know as I shall ever get him home when I am ready to go myself. He has become a regular institution in the Champs d'Elysées, and nearly all its frequenters have a bow and smile for '*l'Americain qui rit*,' as our madame says they call him; and no wonder, for he is always on a broad grin, from the time he leaves the door till his return.

"As for me, I have little time for street-gazing, except as I take a holiday, now and then, when I see so much I go home actually bewildered. What you tell me of Mark Webber is very delightful. He will be thoroughly happy there, I know. How I long to see you all, and especially the youngest inmate, who must now be a most charming little miss! How many teeth has she?

"So Ted can really walk with a cane! Isn't that too good?

"O Jacqueline, when one uses money as your family do, what a blessing it becomes! I often turn from the luxury and splendor here with a feeling almost of loathing, so sharp are the contrasts with the poverty, perhaps just around the corner. It seems so selfish, so heartless!" . . .

Jacqueline laid down the closely written letter of many thin, foreign-looking sheets, which she had been reading aloud, and looked across to Arlene, who

sat sewing opposite, while baby Celia played at her feet.

"Aunt Arl," she asked dreamily, "do you think Theo will ever come back?"

"Yes, Jaca; why not?"

"But if she gets to be a fine artist there, will she care to? Would she ever be happy to settle down here to an every-day life like ours?"

"What do *you* think, Mark?" asked Mrs. Harper, looking up with a mischievous smile to the figure which had just darkened the doorway.

"I think — she will — in time," was the rather disconnected reply, and the young man's bronzed cheeks took on a deeper color than usual.

Jacqueline sprang up quickly.

"Mark, is it so? Will she come to — the cottage, and to you?"

"She has promised it, Jaca, next year."

"The dear girl! I congratulate you. Why, Mark, how charming it will be! — and that big room beyond your laboratory, in the old building, where the sky-light is, would make her a splendid studio, wouldn't it?"

"So your grandmother and I thought, when we were planning it," he answered demurely, and Bert's hearty laugh behind him was echoed by Arlene's within.

"I declare, you've all known it but I," exclaimed Jacqueline, as near pouting as she ever could be.

"No, no, little friend; don't say that," said Mark quickly. "Your grandmother is the only one I ever told. It was all conjecture with the rest."

"Only we're Yankees at guessing, and you aren't; eh, Jaca?" cried Bert teasingly. "Come on, baby, let's ride to Boston," and, catching up the pretty, golden-haired little sprite, he began racing up and down the room with her, to the entire extinguishment of further talk.

It is two years later — a soft, fragrant evening in June — and the Leavenworth house has an unwonted air of festivity about it.

Lights gleam in the windows and flash from secluded corners of the grounds, while in the large rooms are gathered nearly all the friends whom we have met here before, and many new ones, to welcome Bert on the completion of his collegiate course.

The handsome, even distinguished-looking young B. A., is leaning on the back of a large chair, where sits Mrs. Leavenworth, like a queen in state — for who can be more of a queen than she who reigns by love over the hearts of children and grandchildren? The wee Celia, pet of the household, is examining an album on her knee, while Arlene, grown a trifle

stouter, but still very charming in her thin black dress with cherry trimmings, hovers near awaiting a good chance to bear her off to bed, when she has finished the endless stories she is telling "Bamma" and "Umple Be't," about the photographs; while George and Bessie look on, laughing at the little witch.

Bessie has grown to be a beautiful young woman with rather regal airs that become her well, but has the same brilliant smile and hearty friendliness of manner, that belonged to the girl who promised Miss Patty to stand by Jacqueline through every thing, — a promise which she has well redeemed. If in time — a short time probably — she becomes her sister in name as she has long been in feeling, we need not be greatly surprised.

At a little distance is another group, the centre of which seems to be a tall, dark-eyed young lady, with an indescribably sweet, spirituelle face, and an undulating form that seems almost to float in the delicate pink of her robes as she stands talking, with an earnestness natural to her, to jolly Mr. Hapgood and Mr. Randall, who have scarcely changed at all in appearance. Leaning on a chair, and drinking in every word, is a tall, fine-looking young man, with a dark mustache, who wears the uniform of a naval officer.

"Oh, hear! hear!" he cries in a deep voice.

"Theo, come to your uncle's defence. Jacqueline hasn't left him a leg to stand on," and, at his laughing command, there advances a young woman of such fine presence, and perfect costume, that she seems for the moment to throw all the rest into the shade.

"What is it, Arthur?" she asks merrily.

"Oh, it's a discussion on alms-giving, and your uncle is upholding the idea of relegating it all to law, and doing away entirely with private charities."

"I'm afraid I can't support him then," laughs Theo, in her pleasant contralto voice. "Public charities and legal enactments are well and good, but they are heartless things after all. I can imagine even a beggar being made the happier, because of a sympathetic smile given with the piece of bread. No, I feel that I would rather be imposed upon a good many times, than turn one needy person from my door, and what I can do of good, I must say I like to make a personal affair, not perhaps so much for the needy one's good as my own."

"But one gets so tired of giving, don't you think?" asks Charlie Talbot, joining the group. "It seems as if, nowadays, every one was an impostor."

"I haven't found it so," says Jacqueline thoughtfully. "It seems to me, indeed, that there are many poor who conceal their need as long as they possibly can, and then there are always the little children;

surely, they are not to blame if their natural protectors leave them unprovided for ? "

"No business to be alive," cries Mr. Hapgood, with a sly twinkle that shows how little he means the words. "Dr. Webber, come here ! I want you to put your wife through a course of discipline. She's taking sides against her old uncle."

"Really, my dear," laughs Mark, coming forward and laying a hand on Theo's shoulder, "if that's the case I shall cease to be jealous. I've always thought Uncle Jonas the only man to whom you were thoroughly devoted. I'm sincerely pleased to find myself mistaken. However, isn't it a rather ridiculous idea for a man who spends his life in secret good works to be arguing like this ? "

"Especially," puts in Jacqueline, so softly that only the kind old gentleman can hear, "to one who has found you her right hand man in her own pet charity, which, by the way, she might never have thought of but for her experiences of public and private charity before she was — transplanted."

Then Bert's voice breaks in, —

"A song ! a song ! Come, every body, grandmother wants a song ; " and so their thoughts flow off into lighter channels ; for where there is peace, sincerity, and love, the heart is light, the present full of joy, and the future, of faith and hope.

720